The process of engagement in non-violent collective action: case studies from the 1980s

Mastnak, Lynne

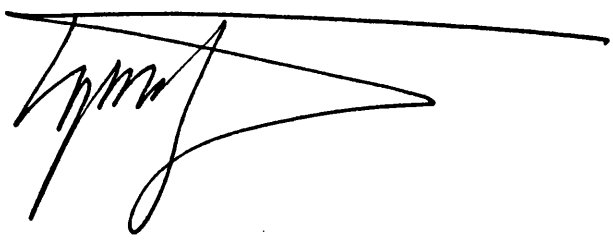
Award date:
1995

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT IN NON-VIOLENT COLLECTIVE ACTION

Case Studies from the 1980s

submitted by Lynne Mastnak
for the degree of PhD
of the University of Bath
1995



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ABSTRACT

THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT IN NON-VIOLENT COLLECTIVE ACTION

Case Studies from the 1980s

by Lynne Mastnak

This thesis examines the process of engagement in non-violent collective action. It is a cross- cultural study - using the methods of life history interview, participant observation and archival research - of twelve individuals drawn from three anti-militarist movements that emerged in the 1980s. The movements were: in Britain, the Greenham Common women; in Poland, Wolnosc i Pokoj; and, in Guatemala, the Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities. Its aim is to understand how individuals move from belief to collective action and how their values are incorporated into the movements in which they engage.

My findings challenge the global model of protest behaviour that fails to separate non-violent collective action from other forms of protest. They also challenge the idea of a unitary explanatory model of commitment: in particular, both the psychopathological model - in which political engagement is a decontextualised, irrational process - and the hypothesis that engagement is simply a response to structural injustice. My findings suggest that political engagement may be not only the result of psychological processes within the individual or merely a response to the external world, but, rather, a unique combination of the two: it is a particular individual's

response to a particular set of historical circumstances that produces engagement. Three possible models are proposed: they involve both affective and cognitive processes and depend on the interplay of historical events with the individual's own life circumstances. There are cross-cultural continuities, but also significant differences in the role of fear which are crucial to understanding the timing of initial involvement.

Finally, I examine the relationship between choice of method of action and the process of commitment. Culture can have an overriding influence on the development of a particular moral perspective but no one moral perspective is especially associated with non-violence. Engagement in non-violent action can foster awareness of the importance of connection and relationship. Moreover, moral perspective and thinking about the useful limits of non-violence appear to be related.

CONTENTS

Introduction 4

Chapter

1. METHODOLOGY 9

The Life History Approach 12
Participant Observation 15
Grounded Theory 19
The Critique of Qualitative Methods 21
Conclusion 45

2. METHOD 48

The Interviews: the Selection of Respondents 53
Conducting the Interviews 56

Translation 58
Confidentiality 60
Participant Observation 60
Library and Archival Work 61
Data Analysis 62

3. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 72

Part 1: Coming to Commitment 72
Macro Approaches 75
Micro Approaches 81
The Synthetic Approach 114

Part 2: Choosing Non-violence 124
Political Science Literature 127
Feminist Studies 129
The Relationship Between Moral Judgement and Activism 133
Relationship Between Moral Orientation and Self 141
Empathy 161
Autobiographical and Biographical Studies 172

4. RATIONALE 175

5. THE POLITICS OF CONNECTION: THREE ANTI-MILITARIST MOVEMENTS IN THE 1980S 181

The New Cold War 184
Britain: The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp 186
Poland: Wolnosc i Pokoj (Freedom and Peace) 205
Guatemala: The Runujel Junam Council for Ethnic Communities 234
Anti-militarism in a Cold War Climate 269

6. "IF NOT US, WHO?": FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES 281
Britain: The Greenham Women 282
Guatemala: CERJ and CONAVIGUA 295
Poland: WiP 306

7. THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS: THE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE AND OTHER ROUTES TO ENGAGEMENT 319
Crucial Episodes 322
Abstract Concerns 352
Inhibited by Fear 360

8. THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA 373

9. "IF NOT THIS WAY, HOW?": PRACTISING NON-VIOLENCE 403

10. CONCLUSION 450

APPENDIX 1 (Summaries of respondents' political commitments) 464

APPENDIX 2 (Interview protocols) 493

BIBLIOGRAPHY 503

List of figure and tables

Figure 1 (An Interactional Model of the Life Course) 47

Tables

Table 1: Research Diary 66
Table 2: Process of Engagement in Crucial Episodes 371
Table 3: Gradual Engagement Process 372

INTRODUCTION

It is December 1981, a woman sits with a few others around a fire in deep snow. The fire is outside a military base in southern England and the woman has walked from her home in Wales to camp there in permanent protest at the plans to deploy a new generation of nuclear missiles at the site. Few people know of the action and the Ministry of Defence has informed them that the matter has been fully debated and that they can stay as long as they like. It is December 1981, a young man sits in prison in Krakow, Poland, where he has been interned by his government for organising an independent students union under the auspices of Solidarity. By 1991 the missiles had come and gone, as had the government that imprisoned the young man, as had the Soviet Empire and the Cold War itself.

One approach to understanding this period is to understand the history of those individuals who helped to create it; who, committed in principle to non-violence, organising collectively, and acting outside the established political systems of their country, aimed quite simply to increase social and political justice and peace. It seems particularly important to understand how such people came to choose to act, often at great personal risk, and why they chose non-violence. It is this process of engagement in non-violent collective action that I decided to make the topic of my dissertation.

This is a wide question. I focussed it by

concentrating on those activists who at some point in time had made a full-time commitment to an issue. I wanted to look at individuals using non-violence to confront what I regarded as the key issues of the time, indeed the issues that made up the bipolar logic of the Cold War: peace and human rights. I stress the use of non-violence. Many studies of dissent or opposition movements have not bothered to distinguish activists by their choice of method or noted the use of non-violent means at all. Non-violent protestors and terrorists are all too often seen as part of the same large group. Yet non-violence is one of the outstanding features of most of the significant movements of the 1980s: whether outside the Russian White House, on the streets of Prague, at Greenham Common, in Santiago, or Manila.

In addition, I was anxious not to confine myself to one country or political culture. The impact of the Cold War was global. Its bitter logic created repression and conflict throughout the Third World as well as in Western and Eastern Europe and I wished my sample to reflect these different manifestations. I was also struck by the fact that activists in non-violent social movements seemed to have much in common with each other, even when acting in different countries. Finally, as all social movements are composed of smaller tendencies and fragments, I wanted to identify activists in groups which had a short enough history to allow me to study the political context of their actions fairly comprehensively, and which would provide easy access to the main participants.

Thus I chose to identify activists in three groups that were already familiar to me from my own activism and journalism in the 1980s: one, the Greenham Common women, is from a Western liberal democracy: a feminist peace movement in Britain, it began in 1981 and was a prime mover in the massive West European mobilisation against the arms race in the early 1980s. The second, Wolnosc i Pokoj (WiP: Freedom and Peace), is from Poland, then an East European totalitarian state. WiP, an independent peace and human rights movement, was founded in 1985 and played a significant role in helping Solidarity re-emerge from the underground. The third is the Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ) in Guatemala, a Central American country which, though under quasi-civilian rule, continues to be dominated by the military. Founded in 1988, along with its sister movement, CONAVIGUA, a self help group for widows, CERJ was the main indigenous human rights movement in Guatemala.

In each of these groups I planned to identify ten activists to interview in depth in order to explore the process of engagement. I should make clear that the groups themselves were not the main objects of my research. They provided the framework and context within which the respondents in my study acted for a substantial part of their careers. This, then, was the starting point of my research.

This is an interdisciplinary study: in the course of my inquiry I have drawn upon the disciplines of social

psychology, political science, sociology, and social history. In fact, as my own conception of the issues initially derived from my personal experience of living with activists over a number of years, I have found limitations in all these approaches, and I am presenting what I see as a synthesis of them. The result is not one theoretical model of the process of engagement which is then tested by the data. Rather, I have drawn on both my data and previous research to produce a pluralistic perspective. It is because of this that I have adopted a slightly unusual chapter order. I deal with the methodological issues first. I do this because I feel that it makes sense to describe the process through which one engages in research, including the way one's research ideas emerge from both personal experience and a reading of the relevant literature, before actually reviewing that literature. This is also consistent with my commitment to a narrative approach. Thus in **chapters 1** and **2** I explain the reasoning behind my use of particular qualitative research methods and describe the processes involved in actually carrying out the research: that is, how I developed the methods I used, the problems I encountered, and the way my ideas developed over time. **Chapter 3** reviews the literature that has informed my own thinking on individual commitment and non-violent collective action. **Chapter 4** summarises the ways in which I believe my own data challenges the established models and suggests new theoretical perspectives on the process of engagement. **Chapter 5** summarises the history of the three groups and

explains the historical and political context in which they functioned. Chapter 6 examines the background and formative experiences of the activists prior to their engagement. Chapter 7 looks at the processes of engagement in detail. Chapter 8 looks at the specific role that childhood trauma might play in later engagement. Chapter 9 examines the choice of non-violence as a means of action and the relationship this has with the individual's sense of self and moral values. Chapter 10 provides a conclusion.

CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 2 I will explain how I did the research. In this chapter I intend to explain why I conducted the research in the manner that I did. Just as there is no such thing as value-free research, I also believe there is no such thing as a value-free choice of method. Thus it seems important at the outset to explain how my choice of method was determined not only by the theoretical and practical considerations of what was most appropriate for the task, given my resources, but what personal factors influenced that choice.

Firstly, through my experience as a doctor and psychiatrist I was familiar with both the rigours and usefulness of the positivist approach of the natural sciences, in particular with the sacredness and assumed objectivity of the double-blind, randomised, controlled trial in evaluating treatment; and with the manner in which, all too frequently, in my own specialty "patients" appeared to act idiosyncratically and defy science. I had discovered that there was no way that any number of clinical tests, and personality and symptom checklists, could be substituted for the information gained through the human interaction that occurred in taking a full life history. This was the only way to aquire an understanding of the processes which had brought a patient to the consultation, the thoughts and feelings involved, the contexts in which they occured and

their meaning for the patient. Nor was there any way to measure or quantify the impact of one of the most important aspects of treatment, the formation of a relationship. To be understood these processes had to be described in all their singularity. In this way they could also increase understanding and provide some guidance for the next "case".

Secondly, I was aware both of the dangers of doing decontextualised research and of the growing critique of that form of research, from the feminist movement in particular. And as an activist I had also noticed how difficult it was to convey one's own understanding of oneself and one's actions to others. Too often journalists and researchers arrived at an action with questions based on preconceived ideas and stereotypes, and had little interest in shifting the framework of the discussion to what those engaged in the action felt was appropriate, so that the activist was left with the choice of silence or distortion.

The feminist critique of scientific method that challenges both this "invisibility or distortion of women as objects of knowledge", and the positivist approach that seeks to "establish universal laws of cause and effect within a world of objectively defined facts, . . . existing independently of the activities of social agents",[1] made sense to me. For example, no amount of quantified data determining the effectiveness of drug A could compensate for a lack of understanding of the personal, cultural and

---

[1] M. Westkott, "Feminist Critiscism of the Social Sciences", *Harvard Educational Review* 49, 4 (1979), p. 423.

historical factors that made person B choose not to take it when prescribed. The taking of measurements in order to "predict and control" too often seems a substitute for genuine understanding and "obscures the way that psychological studies necessarily involve relationships between persons, rather than between psychologist as 'expert' and his subject as the object of research".[2]

Such a critique comes not only from feminists. Reason and Rowan, in introducing what they define as "new paradigm research", challenge "the whole language of 'operational definition' [and] 'dependent and independent variables' [as] highly suspect. It assumes that people can be reduced to a set of variables which are somehow equivalent across persons and across situations. [This] is a flight from understanding in depth, a flight from knowing human phenomena as wholes. It means that the person, group, community *as such* is never known".[3]

Critiques such as these have led to a growth in qualitative research in the human sciences. Fortunately, a qualitative methodology appeared appropriate to my research from a theoretical as well as personal point of view. I needed a method that both would allow me to examine dynamic and interactive processes taking place over time and would help me to understand behaviour taking place in specific

---

[2] Karen Henwood and Nick Pidgeon, "Seeing Through Women's Eyes: Qualitative Methods and Feminist Research", June 1992. (Mimeographed.)

[3] Peter Reason and John Rowan, *Human Inquiry: A Source Book of New Paradigm Research* (Chichester: Wiley, 1981), p. xiv.

cultural and political contexts. In addition, while I wished to examine and understand the process of engagement in non-violent collective action, at the outset I had no specific hypotheses or assumptions about this process that I wished to test. On the contrary, I hoped that the data itself would generate theories.

Thus, my principle source of data has been activist life histories obtained by in-depth, semi-structured interviews. In addition, I have spent periods with each group as a participant observer, and have drawn on data collected by myself as participant or journalist in the years preceding my research. I have also made extensive use of library and archival sources to increase my understanding of the historical, cultural and political context of each group, and where possible to verify information obtained using the other methods.

The Life History Approach

The life history approach actually encompasses a number of different approaches, ranging from psychoanalytic psychobiographies of prominent individuals to brief case studies for judicial or clinical purposes. I would define my own approach as drawing on what Runyan defines as a "life course theoretical orientation" and on the psychohistorical tradition. Runyan defines the life course orientation as being "concerned with sequences of experience in the natural

environment and thus with the processes through which persons, situations and behaviours influence each other over the course of time". Runyan conceptualises the life course as a sequence of processes, interacting with each other: "(1) *behaviour-determining processes:* resulting from the interaction of persons with situations, (2) *person-determining processes:* or the processes which create, maintain, and change personal states and characterisics, and (3) *situation-determining processes:* or the processes through which people select, create and influence the situations they encounter."[4] His illustration of the relationship between these three is given in Figure 1 (p.47). Runyan's argument is that while personality trait, behavioural, or sociostructural approaches may provide some understanding of particular groups of people engaging in a specific behaviour over time in a particular environment, the full career can only be understood with a "sequential interactionist" approach.[5] Thus, instead of asking what are the personality traits or what are the environmental conditions that lead to engagement, the questions become: what sort of person in what sort of situation behaves in this way? And how does this behaviour subsequently affect the person and their situation and further behaviour?

I also draw on the psychohistorical tradition. By psychohistorical I mean the use of explicit and formal

---

[4] William McKinley Runyan, *Life Histories and Psychobiography: Explorations in Theory and Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) pp. 83--87.

[5] Ibid., p. 84.

psychological theory to understand historical behaviour.[6] As will be clear from my review of the literature in Chapter 3, I share Runyan's critique of the ahistorical, reductionist and determinist nature of many psychobiographical studies, studies in which, particularly in the psychoanalytic work, adult behaviour is seen to be solely determined by early childhood experiences. But I also agree with him that psychodynamic concepts and social psychology can be resources that are drawn upon to understand particular events and processes.[7] Lifton advocates the study of "groups of men and women whose own history can illuminate important characteristics of our era". He suggests that in such groups one can detect "shared psychohistorical themes" that emerge from specific collective experiences.[8] My own choice of groups of peace and human rights activists who were confronting violence and oppression in different cultural settings was made in the hope that their experiences could indeed illuminate some of the grimmest and the most hopeful aspects of life in the last decade of the Cold War.

It is difficult to see how the particular topic I wished to explore could be examined in any other way than by asking individuals to tell their own stories. The process of engagement has some observable behavioural

---

[6] Ibid., p. 201.

[7] Ibid., pp. 213, 116.

[8] Robert Jay Lifton, *History and Human Survival* (New York: Random House, 1971) pp. 7--8.

manifestations, such as changes in work pattern, friendship circle and so on. Nevertheless, for the most part, the process is made up of a shift in beliefs and feelings motivated by interpretations of past and present events, and it can only be understood by asking the person concerned to tell one about it. Nor is it possible to see how any form of structured questionnaire could fully encompass the likely range of experiences. Rather, a questionnaire would impose on the subject my own preconceived frameworks and expectations. Narrative, Runyan argues, is "indispensable, for indicating how people thought and felt, what they said and did, what situations they were in, the subjective meanings of events, how their words and actions were interpreted by others, and the processes by which they interacted with their worlds over time".[9] Asking individuals to relate their own stories of the process of engagement; what they felt led up to it; and what was its impact on their lives: all this provided the most significant part of my data: the activists' own understanding of events. I supplemented this approach with questions to deepen my own understanding of the events and to increase my biographical knowledge. This allowed me to add my own speculations without supplanting theirs.

---

[9] Runyan, *Life Histories and Psychobiography*, p. 61.

Participant Observation

In addition, I drew on periods of participant observation. The term "participant observation" also has a number of meanings and the role is variously described.[10] In my case I have used data gathered from periods as a *total participant*, such as when I lived at Greenham Common as an activist myself; data gathered as a *sympathetic observer*, such as when working as a journalist in Poland and Guatemala in the mid-1980s; and data gathered as a *participant observer* when I lived in the environment of each group for three months. Given the geographic dispersal of the membership of these groups, what this entailed was periods living with my respondents, sharing aspects of their daily lives, including actions and meetings when they occurred - always clearly identified as a researcher. Gans describes total participation as the "most fruitful. For only by being completely immersed in an event as an involved person can one really confront and grasp the social and emotional incentives and pressures that act on people in groups." He recommends that all fieldworkers involve themselves totally for brief periods, although he acknowledges the obvious

---

[10] See, for example, Ronald Frankenberg, "Participant Observers", and Herbert J Gans, "The Participant Observer as Human Being: Observations on The Personal Aspects of Fieldwork", in *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, ed. Robert G. Burgess (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982).

difficulties of observing and recording in such situations, and the question of bias (which I discuss below).[11]

Even without total participation I found that living in a similar cultural and political context increased my empathy for my respondents. For example, I arrived in Guatemala in March 1990 at a point of increasing political tension. Deaths and disappearances were on the increase, as were attacks on foreigners. An American nun had been recently kidnapped and tortured and a bomb thrown into the house of some Western human rights monitors. There was also an upsurge of guerilla activity. Westerners and Guatemalans, like my very charming landlord in Antigua, where I was based, warned me repeatedly against doing research on human rights activists, for my own safety. I wrote in my journal in the first week:

> I am at least learning a lot about fear. What a powerful weapon it is. If you can frighten people, you don't have to do much else because it is totally paralysing, and what cleverer way to induce it than by random and arbitrary acts of violence so that there are no rules to help one protect oneself. The night before coming here [the CERJ human rights office in Quiche] was broken by dreams too bizarre and frightening to put down, but on the bus in the early morning light it all evaporates and none of the people here are frightened so it is impossible to be so when with them.

In fact, the danger to me was miniscule compared to that facing my respondents. However, I did gain a small

---

[11] Herbert J. Gans, "The Participant Observer as Human Being", p. 54.

insight into the kind of atmosphere in which they worked, and into the way in which a certain level of denial, combined with modelling normal behaviour to each other within the group, helped my respondents to cope with and habituate to the situation. This paralysing fear was quite different to the angry fear I experienced participating in Cruisewatch with a group of Greenham women, watching the missile launchers thunder past us on a deployment exercise. Understanding the distinction was important in formulating my own theories about motivation (as will be clear in Chapter 7).

I found that my periods of formal participant observation - mostly spent in the presence of at least one of the respondents - served a number of important functions.[12] These periods gave me a chance to learn far more about the political and cultural context in which action occurred; to observe the relationships of my respondents with others, their role in the group, the way action fitted into their daily lives; and to understand the processes by which collective actions were organised and carried out. Much of this was not large scale public actions but the "submerged" and "invisible" activity that Melucci sees as sustaining social movements.[13] Such

---

[12] Most of these points are made in Howard S. Becker and Geer Blanche, "Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison", in *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement With the Social World,* ed. William J. Filstead (Chicago: Markham, 1971) pp. 132--152.

[13] Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), pp. 207--208.

activity is hard to detect through interviews, for the activists themselves may not regard it as significant. Participant observation allowed time for informal discussions over meals that were often more revealing than the formal interview. It also gave me the chance to check some descriptions against fact, and to spot relevant issues that had not come up in the interview, so that I could raise them later. Perhaps most important, participant observation gave my respondents the opportunity to get to know and trust me, and to ask any questions about the research that concerned them.

Grounded Theory

Filstead suggests that the "direct examination of the empirical social world" embodied in these qualitative approaches of in-depth interviewing and participant observation allows the researcher to "get close to the data, thereby developing the analytical, conceptual and categorical components of explanation from the data itself", rather than from "a priori assumptions and artificial schemes of explanation . . . imposed upon social reality". Thus any emerging theory has more validity because it is grounded in observable reality.[14] Glaser and Strauss

---

[14] Filstead, *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement With The Social World*, p. 6.

developed the term "grounded theory"[15] to refer to theory that is "generated in the course of close inspection and analysis of qualitative data".[16] Although I did not follow their method of analysis in detail, I adopted the principle of allowing concepts and categories to emerge from repeated readings of my transcripts and notes. I also engaged in what Henwood and Pidgeon describe as constant comparative analysis, that is, a continuous alertness to "the similarities and differences which exist between instances, cases and concepts, to ensure that the full diversity and complexity of the data is explored".[17] The usefulness of such an approach is that (though initially I felt rather overwhelmed by a mass of unstructured information), as recurrent themes and patterns began to emerge, I had some confidence that they fitted the data: this approach contrasts with selecting data to fit a pre-formed hypothesis. In fact, one develops a kind of reciprocal relationship with the data as insights emerge. For example, until reading the interviews, I had not considered the role of empathy and different moral orientations in determining the choice of non-violent action. This pushed me to do further reading and to go back into the field and do a second round of more tightly focussed interviews.

---

[15] B. G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New York: Aldine, 1967).

[16] Karen Henwood and Nick Pidgeon, "Qualitative Research and Psychological Theorising", *British Journal of Psychology* 83 (1992), p. 103.

[17] Ibid., p. 103.

The Critique of Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods, in particular in-depth interviewing and participant observation, have been subjected to a number of critiscisms: specifically, that the findings are not generalisable or reliable; that there is a problem of subjective bias, both in the selection of research topic and in terms of one's relationship to one's respondents; and that retrospective data is not valid. I shall deal with each of these points in turn.

Generalisation and Reliability

The difficulty of generalising from qualitative data is only a problem if general laws are the sole goal of the research. Allport, in the 1960s, pointed out that the study of the unique is as important as the study of the general. He lamented that "the intricacy of internal structure in concrete lives seldom challenges or detains us". And he suggested that the study of the individual was not only a "source of hunches" from which to develop hypotheses but also a means of examining whether those generalisations were relevant. "Instead of growing impatient with the single case and hastening on to generalisation, why should we not grow impatient with our generalisations and hasten to the

internal pattern."[18] Allport was still concerned to find ways of making the study of the individual more scientific and systematic. This is in contrast to the French sociologist Bertaux, who rejects the idea that social relations can in any way be understood in terms of scientific laws that allow for prediction. In advocating life histories as an appropriate method for sociologists, Bertaux states that

> Sociology will never be a *science* in the way that physics or chemistry or astrophysics or biology are. The only knowledge we may hope to reach is of a *historical* character: our present *is* history. Sociological knowledge is the knowledge of a historically-given structure of social relations: the knowledge of the conditions of social struggles, but not the knowledge of their outcome. . . . The idea of sociology as science does not help the development of social knowledge, on the contrary, it hinders it and, if taken seriously, it may even prevent its acquisition.[19]

Sociology is not the only social science for which such views make sense. The clinical case history is exactly that: a unique historical record of one individual's experiences. And some of the most powerful and enduring therapeutic insights used in the Western psychological tradition, such as our understanding of psychological

---

[18] G. W. Allport, "The General and the Unique in Psychological Science", in *Human Inquiry: A Source Book of New Paradigm Research*, ed. Peter Reason and John Rowan (Chichester: Wiley, 1981), pp. 64--65.

[19] Daniel Bertaux, "From the Life History Approach to the Transformation Of Sociological Practice", in *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach In the Social Sciences*, ed. Daniel Bertaux (London: Sage, 1981), pp. 29-46.

defence mechanisms, are based on a handful of clinical case studies.

In studying groups of activists from different cultures I am not attempting to produce any kind of general law about the process of engagement. Rather, I hope to increase understanding of particular processes, in specific cultural contexts, during one period in history. The question that concerns me is not whether any theory produced is generalisable, but whether my findings may challenge the established generalisations and whether these findings "make sense" both to the subjects of the research and to those who read about them. It may be that the findings are in some way transferable to other groups in similar contexts, hence the importance of providing contextual detail.[20] However, the political and historic context is forever changing and cannot be recreated. This is especially the case for my research, which took place at the time of the dramatic transformations of 1989. Thus, rather than transferability, one should perhaps think more in terms of comparability: how do my findings compare with others from different cultures and periods and how does this comparison increase our understanding of those cultures and periods?

A related question is the issue of **reliability.** This is the positivist notion that the trustworthiness of results depends on the possibility of other researchers producing the same findings by repeating the same procedures. Such a demand ignores the fact that human beings, and the social

---

[20] Henwood and Pidgeon, "Qualitative Research", p. 108.

world which they inhabit, alter from moment to moment, as do their responses to different researchers.[21] Nor can one imagine any respondent giving an identical history to the same researcher twice; indeed, one would be suspicious of it's genuineness if they did. Thus no in-depth, contextualised research can be reliable in this sense. What it offers instead is a unique record of depth and complexity. Marshall and Rossman recommend ten standards for trustworthiness in qualitative work. These pertain to transparency and honesty in documenting one's own research method; preserving data; and acknowledging and discussing biases and negative findings. I have tried to meet all these standards.[22]

Subjectivity

The question of whether or not the qualitative approach is biased because of its **subjectivity** dominates the discussion of qualitative methodology and is the central concern in the feminist critique of positivism. The critique challenges the assumption that an objective, unbiased position from which to do research is possible, an assumption, as Gilligan points out, that "runs aground when it comes to discussing

---

[21] Carolyn Wood Sherif, "Bias in Psychology", in *Feminism and Methodology*, ed. Sandra Harding (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1987) p. 47.

[22] Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossmann, *Designing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 1989) pp. 148--149.

sex differences: who other than Tiresias could claim neutrality?" And it is not only in the study of sex differences. In relation to any topic the researcher cannot escape the standpoint of her or his own gender, and it is women's sensitivity to the assumption that the masculine gender represents both neutrality and the norm that has resulted in the sharpest feminist critiques of the concept of valuefree research. Gilligan continues: "as women, however, we are sensitised to difference - aware how easily difference becomes deviation and deviation turns into sin. . . . We know how readily psychological language can cloak moral judgement, allowing statements of value to pass for scientific norms."[23] There is no neutral position "when human individuals turn to studying other human individuals".[24] Thus the real question is not whether we are subjective or not, but whether our subjectivities are made transparent and can therefore be taken into account, or whether they are hidden. Moreover, the attempt to assume disinterest is likely to do more harm than good.

> With respect to things human, it is not disinterest that makes knowledge possible but the opposite; without the factor of *interest* in the primary sense of concern or care, there can be no recognition of the subject matter in its distinctive human character- and hence no real

---

[23] Carol Gilligan, Lyn Mikel Brown, and Annie G. Rogers, "Psyche Embedded: A Place For Body, Relationships, and Culture in Personality Theory", in *Studying Persons and Lives*, ed. A. I. Rabin, Robert A. Zucker, Robert A. Emmons, Susan Frank (New York: Springer, 1990) p. 91.

[24] Sherif, "Bias in Psychology", p. 47.

> awareness of its situation and no understanding of its behaviour.[25]

Becker makes the point that the question of values is intimately connected to the question of power. "The question is not whether we should take sides, since we inevitably will, but rather whose side we are on."[26] He suggests that accusations of bias most commonly arise when "the research gives credence, in any serious way, to the perspective of the subordinate group in some hierarchical relationship".[27] This is because there is a "hierarchy of credibility". That is, in any social system of ranked groups, well-socialised participants take it as a given that the highest ranking groups have access to the most information and therefore have the most credible view, while lower groups, knowing only part of the picture, must necessarily have a distorted view. Naturally, any challenge to this, by, for instance, suggesting that a lower-ranked group's perspective has equal validity, challenges the established order and is thus problematic.[28] Becker's solution is a call for researchers to be honest to

---

[25] Floyd W. Matson, *The Broken Image* (Garden City N. Y.: Anchor, 1966), pp. 242--243, cited by Filstead, *Qualitative Methodology*, p. 5.

[26] Howard S. Becker, 'Whose Side Are we On?', in *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement With the Social World*, ed. William J. Filstead (Chicago: Markham, 1971), p. 15.

[27] Ibid., p.17.

[28] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

themselves and others about their sympathies and to remain open to findings that challenge those sympathies.

The question of whose side we are on is reflected both in the choice of topic and in deciding for whom we think we are doing research. Harding points out that "the questions an oppressed group wants answered are rarely requests for so-called pure truth. Instead they are requests about how to change its conditions; how its world is shaped by forces beyond it; how to win over defeat, or neutralise those forces arrayed against its emancipation, growth, or development."[29] All of my respondents, all of whom considered themselves to be working in marginalised and oppressed groups (although the perpective of the Poles was altered by the events of 1989), repeatedly asked me for whom and for what purpose I was doing the research. My answer was that I believed that the non-violent movements in which they were engaged had played an important role in promoting peace and human rights. Understanding how people come to act non-violently to promote their beliefs, in one particular historic period, might increase our understanding of how to promote such activity in other periods. It might also, by showing the variety of routes to engagement, challenge the negative stereotype of "protestors" in the popular literature. This did not mean that I was engaged in hagiography. It did mean that critique would not be malicious but be made on a basis of general goodwill. I see

---

[29] Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987) p. 8.

this position as similar to Lifton's recommended one of "advocacy and detachment" in which one makes clear one's moral advocacies yet is scrupulous and rigorous in the application of one's chosen method.[30]

The other area where the issue of subjectivity is most contested is in the area of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. As Oakley points out in her review of the methodology texts of the 1960s, the predominant view at that time was that "the errors of poor interviewing comprise subjectivity, involvement, the 'fiction' of equality and an undue concern with ways in which people are not statistically comparable"; while proper interviewing entailed detatchment, opaqueness and control over the interview. Not surprisingly, men were seen to be somewhat better at proper interviewing than women.[31] In contrast, her own view is that "when a feminist interviews women, use of the prescribed interviewing practise is morally indefensible", and that "the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical, and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship".[32] By "non-hierarchical" she means that the

---

[30] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: A Study of the Psychology of Evil* (London: Macmillan, 1986) p. 14.

[31] Anne Oakley, "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms" in *Doing Feminist Research,* ed. Helen Roberts (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 38.

[32] Ibid., p. 41.

interviewer is open to questions about herself from the interviewee.

The value of a genuine and open relationship between interviewer and interviewee is not, to my mind, confined to feminists interviewing women. Cottle, for example, in his life studies of poor families in Boston, makes

> no pretence at objective assessments of these people's lives, the inquiry being subjective and dependent on my relationship with these families. . . . The expression of the investigator's feelings contributes to the reality of the situation, as the situation itself is comprised in part by the investigator. It is through the investigator that one hears these families. Like the families, readers too want to know whether the investigator can be trusted.[33]

Cottle argues eloquently that if we are not moved to make a human connection with our respondents, it is unlikely that our research will touch others:

> When anger never appears, when the day to day heartache and anguish and personal responses to them are deemed inappropriate for intellectuals, researchers and legislators, then that transcendent situation of mutual recognition, as subjective as it must be, is never approached, and the traditional distances and inequalities between people are reiterated and affirmed.

---

[33] Thomas J. Cottle, "The Life Study: On Mutual Recognition and Subjective Inquiry", in *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, ed., Robert G. Burgess (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 123.

Andrews, in her study of political commitment in lifetime socialists, has no doubt that the relationship between herself and her respondents

> had considerable influence upon the actual data. Much of what was said was of a highly personal nature: the content was so humanly engaging that neither the possibility nor the desire to remain detached existed. It is doubtful that the respondents would have spoken with the candour they did had there not been some form of established trust between us.[34]

I also have no doubt that my long established relationship with the Polish and British groups, all the groups' knowledge that I shared, in broad terms, their aims, and my openness about my own feelings and views when asked, made access easier. It contributed to the trust between me and my respondents and made it easier for them to talk about themselves in depth. Nor did this preclude disagreement between us. In one case the prior knowledge that I was pro-choice on the abortion issue resulted in one of my Polish respondents talking in far greater depth and with greater feeling about his own pro-life views on abortion than perhaps would have happened if he had thought I shared his position. However, this did not lead to hostility between us or constrain other aspects of the interview.

Mutual trust and friendship however should not mask the fact that a completely equal relationship between interviewee and interviewer is very hard to establish. This

---

[34] Mollie Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 63.

may be possible in truly collaborative research, especially if it is respondent generated, but in my case my respondents were assisting me with *my* project. I chose whom to approach for interview and whom not. The overall purpose of the interview was dictated by me, and in spite of my commitment to an open and unstructured interview I was embarrassed to hear on the tapes the frustration and impatience in my own voice on a few occasions when I did not feel the respondent was answering what I considered to be an important question. Ideally, I would have liked the respondents to check the transcripts of the interviews in order to clarify anything they felt unhappy about, but this was only possible with the English speaking ones, and the editing, interpretation and presentation of the results still remained in my hands. My personal solution to these issues was, firstly, to make sure that the respondents had the option to withdraw at any point, including after the interviews were complete. Three Greenham women chose to do this. Secondly, to discuss the project as a whole and listen to the respondents' suggestions both on whom else to interview and on aspects of my subject that I might not have considered. One British woman, for example, did not feel her own sacrifices could in anyway be compared with those of the Guatemalans and was worried that I would in some way equate them. (I felt that looking to see if the processes of commitment have anything in common is not the same as equating the sacrifice and cost, something I hope I have not done.) I offered the respondents control of their interview material after I had

finished. The tapes will not be made publically available without their consent. I also bore in mind Gilligan's injunction that, in writing up results, the researcher should imagine she is sitting beside the respondent as she reads them. This does not mean hiding uncomfortable ideas; it does require respect for the respondents' integrity.[35]

I am also aware that the benefits were rather one-sided. However, those respondents that remained in the project appeared to believe in the value of the research and took enormous trouble to help me: offering me hospitality; patiently digging out archives of papers; showing me around their communities; introducing me to friends; arranging special meetings of the group; and on some occasions - in Guatemala - running personal risks. Some of my respondents, as occurred with Andrews, seemed to welcome the opportunity to review their lives so far and to explore the issues I raised. One commented that she found the interviews very "therapeutic".

I was also aware of the power imbalances caused by class, gender and cultural differences. I was acutely aware of this in Guatemala, where I was interviewing individuals earning less than a dollar a day, who would politely enquire about the cost of my plane ticket, express amazement, and then thank me for coming to see them and taking an interest in their work. There is no question that I saw their world through my own cultural lens, and am aware that they must have edited and adjusted their narratives according to

---

[35] Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment*, p. 49.

their perceptions of me: a problem Zur encountered in her work on Guatemalan widows.[36] Nevertheless, given that the political problems they faced were some of the unpleasanter tentacles of a global problem - the Cold War - and that the movement they had constructed drew on a Western human rights tradition, I felt that my subjective view was better than no view at all.

Remembering the Past

The anthropologist Boas concluded that life histories were "valuable rather as useful material for a study of the perversion of truth brought about by the play of memory with the past".[37] Certainly a concern that people continue to have about life history material is that it must necessarily be retrospective - even daily journals are written after the event - and therefore inaccurate. However, as Andrews states, "the way in which a life is recalled by the person who lived it is as important as what actually happened during that life."[38] Like her, I am not attempting to use these life histories to reconstruct an accurate historical

---

[36] J. Zur, *Violent Memories: Quiche War Widows in Northwest Highland Guatemala* (PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1983), pp. 217-- 218.

[37] F. Boas, "Recent Anthropology", *Science* 98 (1943), p. 335, quoted in David G. Mandelbaum, "The Study of Life History", in *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, ed. Robert B. Burgess (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 147.

[38] Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment*, p. 63.

record of the period. My interest is in my respondents' own understanding of their journey to commitment and in the meaning they give to their experience. My aim is to understand their understanding of how they became engaged. This subjective understanding is as valid as my own outsider's perspective. Probably more so, as Andrews continues:

> When an individual looks back over her life, she makes connections between events and situations which she would not have had the perspective to make at the time that she lived through them. The term life story is useful; in a story it is not until the end, if at all, that the various apects of the tale all come together, and connections are thus illuminated.

This being the case, as I stated earlier, it is difficult to see how my particular topic could be researched either simultaneously or prospectively. It is not simply that the researcher cannot have access to what is happening inside her respondent's head until these processes are narrated to her, but the respondent herself is only able to select what circumstances, thoughts, and feelings pushed her into, or inhibited her from, action *after* they have occurred. The advantage of narrating her whole life story to another person is that in the narration she examines and selects what has meaning for her, while, hopefully, through supplementary questioning, the outsider might be able to identify other attributes or influences that the subject had not initially thought of herself. For example, a regular

supplementary question that I asked was, "who was the most important person for you as a child?" This often highlighted aspects of personality and past experience that the respondent had not previously recalled. To illustrate this point I have selected a long quotation from an interview with one of my Polish respondents, Magda:

L: Who was the important person in your family, when you think about it?
M: My great-grandmother.
L: Your great-grandmother?
M: Yes.
L: What was her personality like?
M: Oh yes, she was quite strict.
L: Strict?
M: Yes. conscientious, she had a great influence.
L: In what way?
M: I guess that I have many . . . she was very stubborn, the whole family said that. She said, nothing can change her mind. So I guess that I have some features of her.[39]

This led into a discussion of the way politics was discussed in Magda's house as a child (this is an edited section of the continuing interview):

L: Did she talk about things with you, I mean she must have known a very different Poland as well?
M: Yes.
L: Did she talk about that with you?

---

[39] In the interviews with, and statements by, repondents ". . . " indicates a hesitation; "[. . .]" indicates editing by the author.

M: Not really. I know the history of my family very well, which was very dramatic, in fact, so, you know, there were so many people killed in the Second World War in concentration camps. My great . . . my grandmother's husband was killed there . . . and her son and sister of the husband, many, many people. They were taking part, some of them were taking part in the uprising in Warsaw and the sister of my grandmother's husband, she was taking part in the uprising in the ghetto and she was taken to the concentration camp; she is even on the list of the people from the ghetto who were. And yes, the other men were taken simply from home to the concentration camp.

L: Was this talked about a lot when you were a child?

M: No, not really but somehow it was there,

L: In what way, what do you mean?

M: I don't know. But you know there are always these memories, . . . like a postcard that my great-grandmother was sent from the concentration camp, you know. And at the family meetings. They talked because one brother was killed, and the other escaped from the camp and he's still alive, but I think he was very disturbed mentally because of his experience, but at the time he was much better than now , and he talked you know. . . .

L: And as a child do you remember thinking about the war or concentration camps?

M: Yes, very much.

L: Were they the sort of things that frightened you, or . . . gave you nightmares even, or . . . ?

M: Yes. [. . .] But in fact what I feel that was not very good was my family was . . . they were not talking a lot about politics because maybe they thought . . . I guess they wanted, they talked... I was angry because they talked, I noticed that they talked when I go to sleep, so that I won't hear, but I was crazy with that. Because I was also interested in it but they wanted, that maybe it's too early for a child to get these, to know these things... so I was very angry.

L: What sort of things would they talk about when you were asleep?
M: Oh, about Soviet Union, yes.
L: They were angry with the Soviet Union?
M: Yes, very much.

What comes across in this narrative is, firstly, that some of Magda's forebears were activists themselves, that public history had a personal meaning for her, which in some aspects was very frightening; and, secondly, that politics was both present and somehow hidden in her early childhood, so that it became a subject of mystery and interest. Later in the interview, Magda talked of how she would fantasise, before sleeping, of defeating the Germans as the member of a famous fictional Polish tank crew. It is not possible to see how the subtlety and complexity of the political atmosphere in Magda's childhood and its impact on her could have been conveyed in anything but narrative retrospective form; and what is significant is not the historical facts - which relatives actually survived or fought in the Ghetto uprising - but the meaning of these events for her.

Conway suggests that autobiographical memory, which he defines as

> memories of complex events, [containing] high self reference, [and usually featuring] sensory, perceptual and reflective information fairly equally [are] never true in the sense that they are literal representations of events. . . . Nevertheless, autobiographical memories may be accurate without being literal and may represent

> the personal meaning of an event at the expense of accuracy."[40]

As an example he cites Neisser's study of John Dean's remarkably detailed testimony to the Watergate commitee. "His amazing ability to recall the minutiae of past events earned him the name 'the human tape recorder'." In fact, when compared with the real tape-recorded transcripts, he was "remarkably innaccurate, in his recollection of conversations between himself and the president [and] in his recall of specific events". However "the basic accuracy of his recall of the *meaning* of his conversations with Nixon showed that [he] had accurately preserved a basically correct *interpretation* of the events. Thus a critical feature of autobiographical memories is that they represent interpretations or meanings of experienced events." Neisser also notes that Dean distorted his own role in the events. But one must bear in mind that he was on the defensive in a critical inquiry with enormous implications for his future.[41] In my study it is my respondents' perceptions of their role in history rather than their actual role that interests me.

What is of equal significance for my own study is the research into the role of emotions and self concept. In

---

[40] Martin A. Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), pp. 8--9.

[41] U. Neisser, "John Dean's Memory: A Case Study", *Cognition,* 9 (1981), pp. 1--22, cited in Martin A. Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction,* pp. 96--98.

reviewing this topic Conway concludes that "the emotional intensity and personal significance of an event gives rise to autobiographical memories that are highly available for recall and comparatively resistant to forgetting". An example of this would be the initial events of transitional periods in a person's life, the degree of recall being in part related to the impact of those events upon that person's life. "Such memories may serve many different functions in cognition providing the basis for extended social interactions, maintenance of a dynamic self concept and perhaps . . . the representation of the meaning of concepts."[42]

Conway looks specifically at vivid and flashbulb memories. Flashbulb memories are memories of events of national or international significance preserved along with a selection of apparently trivial personal details, such as exactly what a person was saying and wearing the moment they heard of Kennedy's death.[43] In summarising a good deal of contradictory research, Conway suggests that flashbulb memories are distinguished from other vivid memories by the degree of surprise and consequentiality, that they appear to represent an intersection of personal and public history, and are sometimes associated with high levels of overt rehearsal. Vivid memories, on the other hand, appear to be

---

[42]Conway, *Autobiographical Memory,* pp. 96, 104.

[43] R. Brown and J. Kulik, "Flashbulb Memories", *Cognition* 5 (1977), pp. 73--79, cited in Martin A. Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press), pp. 62--63.

related to events of personal significance or change. Both are more vivid than other types of memory; are associated with high levels of emotional reaction; and "are remarkably consistent over time, suggesting that [they] have some immunity to forgetting".[44]

All of this suggests that, in asking my respondents to remember the circumstances that resulted in life- changing political commitment, I was asking for memories that were likely to be accessible and genuine. The consistency of vivid memories is born out by my own research. With one respondent, Mary, I have three interviews made at intervals over ten years, and access to other data about her. What is remarkable is how her memory of certain personally significant episodes remains unchanged. This sequence also reinforced the importance of bearing in mind context, both in terms of time and place of the interview and in terms of who is doing the interviewing: for example, the first interview was given to explain her presence outside a weapons base, to me a fellow activist, with both of us sitting outside the base at the time, and she remembered only those incidents that seemed directly pertinent. Shortly afterwards, she tidied them up into one incident for a talk on a TV show. Ten years later, in trying to make sense of the whole pattern of commitment over a lifetime, the incidents were recalled as before, but there were

---

[44] Conway, *Autobiographical Memory*, pp. 82--83, 87.

additional incidents that she had not seen as significant before.

I have found that almost half the subjects have vivid memories of certain points of transition in their lives, sometimes linked with public events, sometimes not. I define these as crucial episodes and, in Chapter 7, explore their role in creating commitment. Another perspective is that crucial episodes, by their nature, tend to be vividly remembered because they have a classical shape. The American writer, Fussell, has argued that there is no real history, only literature, and that while actuality is the world of physical sensation, reality is what we do with that world interpretatively. As we know from physiology, interpretation starts with the moment of selective perception. Fussell believes that we remember what is interesting, that is, those sequences that seem to coincide with the plots and narrative patterns already available from folklore, fiction and the arts: this is how we make sense of our lives and we tend to junk the memories that lack classical shape. That is perhaps why the plotless structures of dreams are so difficult to remember until we give them narrative shape.[45] Certainly, many of these crucial episodes resemble in some manner the conversion experience, which has a two-thousand-year history in the western Christian tradition, thus providing some classical

---

[45] Paul Fussell, from notes taken at a symposium on memory, Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore, Maryland, USA, May 1992.

narrative shape for otherwise unstructured personal experience.

Another consideration is the way memory is socially constructed. Zur has explored the way violent political events such as "la Violencia" - the massive attacks by government forces on the indigenous Guatemalans, their communities and their way of life in the early 1980s - are remembered. The Guatemalan widows whom she interviewed come from the same region and were interviewed at the same time as the Guatemalan subjects in my own study. In fact, we have one subject in common. Zur's main contention is that what is remembered depends to a large extent on the political and social function of the memory. "The state uses public, official memories for rhetorical and political purposes; widows, through reworking unofficial secret memories, turn personal tragedy into narratives: both are designed to undermine alternatives."[46] She highlights the silencing effect of official terror; the absence or removal of many of the natural "markers" of memory, such as graves or burned buildings; and the feeling that, as women, they had no authoritative voice with which to speak. She suggests that with extreme mass trauma, the normal mechanisms by which we process memory do not exist. There are no pre-existing categories to give memory form. This is related to Fussell's point. In a sense we all carry, from tradition, observation or experience, schema that say, as it were, that "this is how people behave when there is a

---

[46] J. Zur, *Violent Memories,* p. 216.

death". No such precedents exist for the massive horrors these people suffered, so these horrors remain unstructured chaos, and there is the difficulty of translating the incomprehensible into language. One way to do this was to use a ritualised, simplified and symbolic language: "they burned the buses, they killed the men".[47] Another, used by activists such as Petronila (whose pseudonym is Rosa in my study), was to remind women of the suffering and courage of their ancestors, and particularly the suffering and courage of women such as Esther, Judith and the Virgin in the Bible. "These processes of collectivisation and universalisation through reference to historical figures may put their experiences in context, normalising both the situation and their actions within it which, in turn, decreases their sense of alienation",[48] and make it possible to remember.

When violent events were remembered, narratives would be reconstructed through communal interaction and would also shift in accordance with the narrator's current self perception. The narratives might be reworked to rationalise inaction or to portray a more heroic version of themselves at that time, this enabled them to lessen their diminished sense of self. For the widows, choosing to remember is in itself a political act requiring courage. "Memory, then is constantly in flux. It is continuously being transformed by changes in identity, social experience and by membership of the group and the narratives produced therein. In turn,

---

[47] Ibid., p. 221.

[48] Ibid., p. 253.

memory transforms the narratives and the social experience and possibly even behaviour itself."[49]

My own research is in keeping with Zur's findings, and shows that understanding the role that the remembered traumatic event plays in motivating action does not depend on its historic accuracy. In contrast to the vivid memories of visualising the imagined trauma of a nuclear holocaust that motivated some of the Greenham women, only Rosa among the Guatemalans had what could be described as a crucial episode containing a vivid memory, and her memory was of *hearing* of the killing of a friend, not actually witnessing it. The other three, who actually witnessed the violence in their own communities or the city, did not appear to have vivid or flashbulb memories. They presented these stories in a simple form, unadorned by trivial detail. Moreover, these horrific incidents did not immediately motivate them into action. However, when, some years later, due to changing political conditions, they became activists and were asked by me to make sense of their commitment, they drew on memories of these events as part of the reason that they were active. My suggestion would be that initially such incidents had the chaotic formlessness described by Zur. But the activism in a human rights movement, entailing the endless taking and giving of their own and others' testimony, has made it possible to give these incidents narrative form. They are reconstructed, certainly, and probably inaccurate in many details, but this does not

---

[49] Ibid., p. 233.

affect their significance in the process of engagement, which is examined in detail in Chapter 7. Another point is that none of these three presented heroic versions of their actions in response to those traumas. On the contrary, I was given the impression that all were now somewhat ashamed of their inaction at the time. (Inaction, which from an objective point of view, was certainly lifesaving.) It is perhaps remembering in the context of their current courageous behaviour that enables them to acknowlege this.

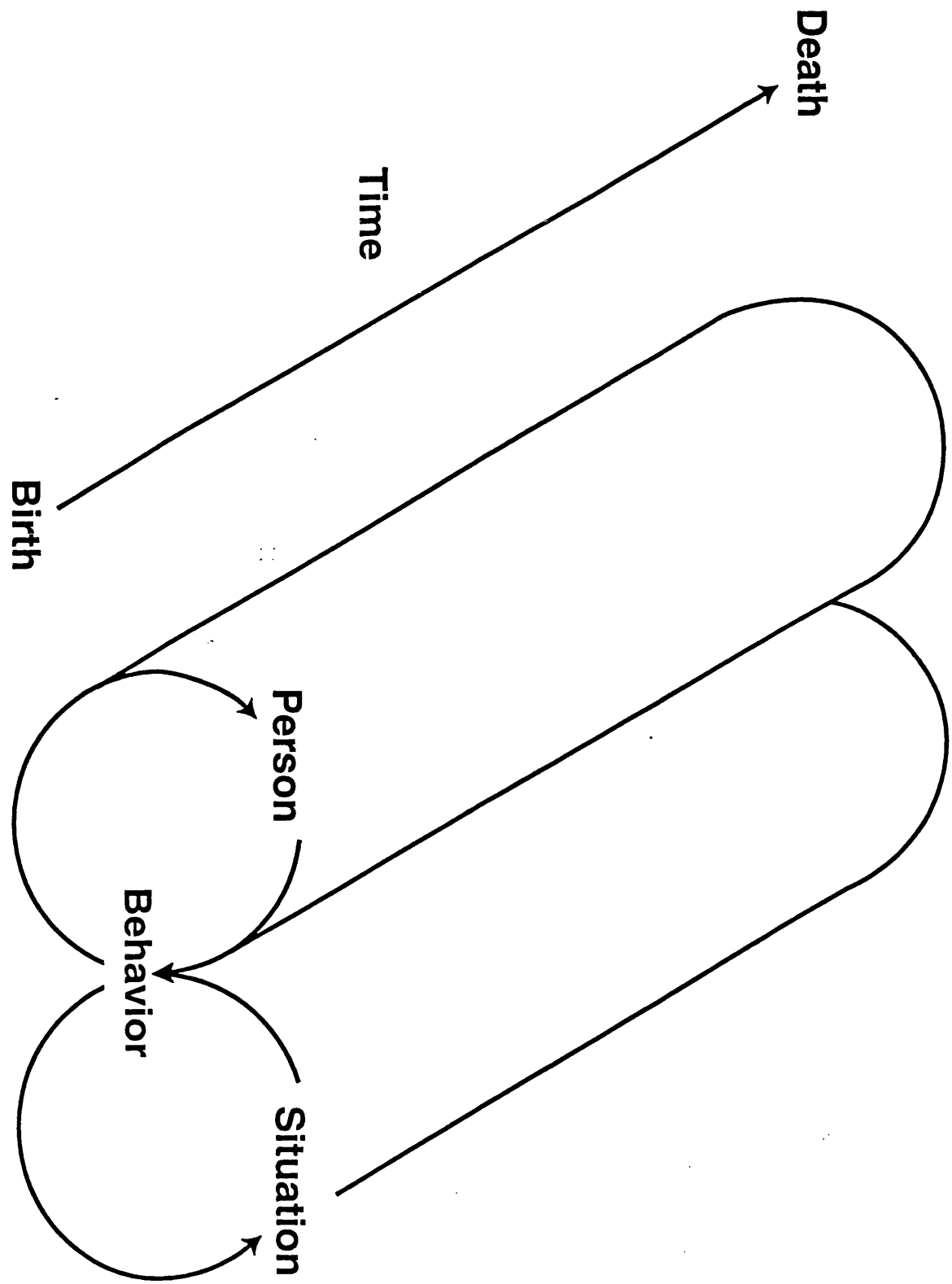
Finally, with all my respondents I was able to verify the accuracy at a more general level by reading contemporary accounts and human rights documentation. Chapter 5 shows that none of my respondents' accounts were at odds with the cultural and historic context in which they lived.

Conclusion

I have tried in this chapter to explain my choice of method - the life history interview and participant observation - and to explore the issues raised by a qualitative approach: focussing particularly on generalisation and reliability, subjectivity and the validity of retrospective data. Henwood and Pidgeon argue that, in the end, what matters is the persuasiveness of the findings: whether they "fit the data well", and are "challenging, stimulating and yet highly plausible in the sense of clearly representing substantive aspects of the problem domain". If they are there should be

an "'aha' experience of discovery".[50] I hope that this proves to be the case.

[50] Henwood and Pidgeon, "Qualitative Research", p. 108.



(Fig. 1.)

Figure 1
An Interactional Model of the Life Course
(Taken from Runyan: *Life Histories and Psychobiography*)

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

In Chapter 1 I explained why I chose the research methods of life history and participant observation. In this chapter I want to describe the actual process of the research. One thing that comes across in reading many published descriptions of method is the apparent smoothness of the process. This is particularly the case with much scientific research: a hypothesis is formed; a procedure to check it is established; results are generated; and conclusions made. And just as the naturalistic sciences have influenced the choice of method of those involved in lifescience research, they have also influenced the way working procedure is presented. One is given the impression from many of the papers reviewed in Chapter 3 that the researchers had a clear idea of an exact question at the outset, that the data - the beliefs, feelings, attitudes or behaviours of groups of human beings - was obtained with ease and the hypothesis thus confirmed or refuted. Yet there is now an extensive body of research from the sociology of science that documents the gap between the sanitised presentation and reality.[1] And a detailed and personal account of scientific inquiry such as Watson's *The Double Helix* exemplifies how even research in pure science is simply not conducted in

---

[1] For example, G. N. Gilbert and M. Mulkay, *Opening Pandora's Box: A Sociological Analysis of Scientists' Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

this way.[2] Personal inclinations, talents, ambitions, relationships: all have an enormous influence on the whole process, beginning with the choice of topic to explore. Random events and geography - who is working in what lab; who met who at what conference; the failure to take notes at a particular meeting - all play a part. There may be a broad general question but the detailed hypothesis is constantly refined and modified as the work proceeds.

All of these influences are obviously even more important in research on human beings. What I do in this chapter is describe my research process "warts and all", rather than in any "tidied up" form, in order to show the way that naturalistic research conducted over four years is profoundly affected by the business of ordinary life; that the researcher herself is changed by her interaction with her respondents and her data; and that both researcher and respondents are affected by historical and personal events.

First of all I present an abbreviated research diary (see Table 1, pp. 66-71) to set the research process in an historical and personal context. Erikson emphasises the need in all psychohistorical work to take into account not just the psychohistorical moment for the subject of the research but also for the researcher. Where the researcher is in her own life will profoundly affect the way she conducts the interview and what she draw out of it. Thus Erikson sets his investigation of Gandhi's "midlife crisis"

---

[2] James D. Watson, *The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Structure of DNA* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981).

clearly in the context of his own journeys to India with his wife, the political events of that time and his feelings about these, the personal events that occurred, and the personal relationships formed. This acknowledgement of his presence, and his personal feelings about his informants and Gandhi himself, add to the strength of the inquiry.[3]

Secondly, the chronology will enable me to demonstrate the manner in which my initial research question emerged out of my personal history and was transformed over time. Thirdly, I will describe in detail how I conducted my fieldwork and analysed my data.

Even a brief glance at the diary shows what a piecemeal affair research is. Ordinary life - relationships, the business of earning a living and finding lodgings - intrudes all the time. More significantly, the diary shows that the research was conducted over a period of enormous historical change which affected and altered my own thinking. The diary shows that my involvement with the issues and these groups began in 1980. The bulk of my fieldwork, however, was done in 1989 and the first half of 1990. Events at that time, particularly those in Eastern Europe in 1989, appeared to justify a belief in the transformative power of non-violent social movements. And at the outset of my research I was as interested in the movement as a collective actor as in the individuals within it. However, even at that time it was becoming clear that, at least in Europe, this particular cycle of movement activity was coming to an end. And by

---

[3] Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth* (New York: Norton, 1969).

late 1990 only vestiges of these movements remained to confront the new threats exemplified by the Gulf War, and later, the wars in the Balkans. Moreover, the political consensus and frameworks for action in which the movements were functioning had disappeared. For example, both the Gulf War and Balkan wars split the European peace movements over the rights and wrongs of military intervention. Yet, interestingly, the majority of my respondents continued to be active in different ways, some by transforming themselves into politicians, others by establishing new networks and frameworks for action. In Guatemala, by contrast, the Cold War continued to be fought and the movements it engendered continued to function and grow, in a hostile and dangerous climate.

What this period of massive historical flux highlighted for me clearly was the way my social psychological research was both historical and specific, in the way described by Bertaux in Chapter 1. I was studying the emergence of commitment in a particular historical and political period that had now disappeared. This did not lessen the validity of the research but it obviously affected its generalisability. This is perhaps the case for all naturalistic studies, although normally the cut-off point is not so sharply defined, and the temptation to generalise about the applicability of results to other periods remains.

In addition, my interest had shifted. I was now no longer concerned with examining what impact individuals had on the movements they joined, but regarded the movements as

part of the specific historic context in which a commitment to action emerged. These movements had exemplified the growth and emergence of a particular kind of civil society: non-violent and committed to increasing democratic space. One could argue that the Balkan wars and wars in the former Soviet Union and Somalia exemplified civil society in arms.[4] Thus the choice of non-violence in itself seemed of increasing significance and importance.

It was not only external events that were transforming my ideas. In interviewing my respondents and spending time with them, I became increasingly aware of the way individuals' moral perspectives, and the way they thought of themselves in relation to others, underlay their choice of action. It was the combination of this "feedback" from my data, and an increasing focus on the individual brought about by historical events, that resulted in the second round of interviews in 1991/2, interviews which looked specifically at morality and non-violence.

Finally, the diary also shows that my academic work had to compete with my own "need to act". This, perhaps surprisingly, was not a problem in the initial phases of the research. I felt no temptation to re-engage in the activism of the groups in which I was participant observer, having already made a clear decision to step back into the role of researcher, and regarding this of value in itself. (Although I did, with one of my respondents, and others,

---

[4] Tomaz Mastnak, "Civil Society in War", Ljubljana, 1992. (Mimeographed.)

initiate some small scale initiatives against the Gulf War.) The conflict emerged as it became clear, with the growing horrors of the wars in the Balkans - a region to which I was personally connected - that there was clinical work I could and should do. In the last year of writing up this work I have found myself almost daily struggling with the conflict provoked by the fact that writing about others' individual commitment to action was preventing me from acting myself. In both cases feelings of connection and responsibility jostle with each other: my responsibility to my respondents and to finishing a project, and my responsibility to act where I have specific and appropriate skills. This personal conflict obviously affects and informs the interpretation of my research - I hope productively - in that it has increased my understanding of the way one deals with moral choice.

The Interviews: the Selection of Respondents

In the introduction I described how I came to decide on the three groups. The choice was also partly determined by my personal knowledge of two of the groups - Greenham and WiP - acquired over the previous eight years as an activist and journalist. The trust established over these years gave me unique access to otherwise unavailable material, and meant that participants felt able to talk freely about their lives. It also meant that I could draw on my own notes, articles, diaries, interviews and observations made in the

previous years. The group that I had planned to study in Guatemala - The GAM: the Relatives of the Disappeared - was also familiar to me as a journalist and human rights worker. However, friends in the human rights community in 1988 suggested that the newly formed CERJ, and its sister movement CONAVIGUA, had more in common with the other groups in my study, and they were able to provide me with the necessary introductions.

I initially interviewed ten participants in each group. In all cases my respondents had had at least one year of full time engagement in the group. The selection of respondents was not random. The groups themselves were characterised by their pluralism and fluctuating membership, and I wanted as far as possible to capture that variety in the sample. Thus, for Greenham, I identified women who had been involved at different periods of the camp's history, of different ages and marital status, and whose involvement had taken different forms. Unfortunately, a split in the camp in 1987 had resulted in a small group of women separating itself from the rest of the movement. These women refused to be interviewed by me because I had already made contact and was thus identified with the other group when I approached them. For WiP, whose pluralism was reflected in its geographical dispersal, different towns having different agendas, I chose respondents from the different centres and of both sexes.

With CERJ and CONAVIGUA the fact that most of the membership lived in remote villages, and the physical

difficulties and dangers of travel in the highlands, necessitated me confining my interviews to the leadership - who were most often in the main office - and to members who worked in the office on a voluntary basis. These were also obviously the most committed activists and therefore the most appropriate for the study. These restrictions also meant that I was only able to interview five Maya activists. In addition, in both Poland and Guatemala I did background interviews with political, religious and military leaders, and members of other social movements, in order to increase my understanding of each group and of the political and cultural environment in which it existed.

I used Bertaux's snowballing technique,[5] identifying potential respondents through discussions of my needs with members of the groups who were already known to me. Some of these became respondents themselves, some suggested others. In each case the purpose of the research project was explained and they were asked if they would like to participate. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, in three cases Greenham women who had agreed to participate initially decided to withdraw, two because they had not envisaged how personal the interviews would be, and one because she had not initially understood that the project was not confined to women activists.

---

[5] Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, "Life Stories in the Baker's Trade", in *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach In the Social Sciences,* ed. Daniel Bertaux, (London, Sage, 1981), p. 176.

Conducting the Interviews

The initial round of interviews took approximately five to six hours, split over two or three sessions, depending on whether translation was necessary or not. I used a basic protocol which listed the topics I wished to cover and gave sample questions (see Appendix 2). However, I did not have a rigid interviewing technique. I rarely used the exact order or wording in the questionnaire, preferring the interview to develop as naturally as possible. I would take my lead from my respondent, exploring at first those topics they found easiest to deal with. Thus an interview might begin with a discussion of the respondent's current circumstances and engagements and come later to more personal material or, as with one Guatemalan woman, the respondent might prefer to tell me her childhood story first. Ideally, I would have liked them to return the transcripts to all my respondents for them to check, to clarify anything they felt was unclear, and delete material they felt should not be included. As I explained above, this could only be done with the English-speaking respondents (this group included half the Poles). The process was useful. A number of them saw issues they wished to make clearer. Only a few wanted to make small deletions, in all cases of personal material they felt might upset others and which did not affect my own research. Most important, being aware of their own development and fluidity, they did not request that I changed views that had

altered with time, but that I noted that they now thought differently.

After doing a preliminary data analysis on all the transcripts in spring 1990, I realised that both time and financial resources would not allow me to continue with so large a sample, and that more in-depth analysis and further interviews would have to be done with a smaller group. The first round of interviews had raised the issues of connection and separation and moral values. Thus I decided to develop a second protocol (see Appendix 2) with more specific questions in order to explore moral orientation and sense of self, including a modified version of the Heinz dilemma developed by Kohlberg;[6] more focussed questions on non-violence; and clarifying questions continuing themes from earlier interviews, particularly on the role of responsibility. Thus I identified four respondents from each group, using the same criteria of representativeness as before. In Guatemala circumstances again prevented any choice, in that one of my respondents was no longer leaving her village and it was unsafe to visit her there. Yet, while focussing on these twelve activists to provide the core data of my study, my thinking as a whole was informed by the discussions with the wider group.

---

[6] Lawrence Kohlberg, "The Development of Modes Of Thinking and Choices in Years 10--16", (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1958).

Translation

With half of the Polish respondents and all of the Guatemalans, I had to work with an interpreter. Interviews in Guatemala were conducted in Spanish, my respondents' second language. In each case my interpreters had a full understanding of the project and I was fortunate that they shared my enthusiasm and interest, often helping me to frame questions in a more culturally sensitive way, and contributing to my general cultural and political understanding. I had been concerned that this would produce interviews of limited value compared to my British sample. However, this proved not to be the case. My respondents were extraordinarily generous with their time and took great trouble to make sure I understood them, and they did not appear to be inhibited by the presence of another person. In fact, in many respects when going over the transcripts I felt I had sometimes achieved a better rapport with the Guatemalans and Poles than the British respondents.

There appear to be a number of reasons for this. The first is a cultural difference in response to the media and interviews in general. Greenham women had come to view the British media with suspicion, resenting its preoccupation, in the early years of the movement, with lifestyle and sexuality, and its lack of concern with what they perceived as the central issues. In the late 1980s, when the women were on the receiving end of a great deal of harassment and violence, the media had paid no attention at all. Thus

anyone, researchers included, wishing to do a "story" on Greenham women, was viewed with reserve. I was repeatedly grilled both at camp and in a kindly way by my respondents as to what my research was for and whom it would benefit. Was I "making a career" or "money" "on the backs of women"? These were fair and important questions that challenged me and made me constantly evaluate what I was doing, but they also led to some initial constraint in the interviews. (Fortunately the women who appeared most representative of different aspects of the group's history for the final sample were also those with whom I had developed the greatest rapport and had the most open discussion.)

In Guatemala and Poland, however, my repondents perceived international interest and concern as a lifeline, ensuring the respective group's survival and contributing to their personal safety. Guatemalans particularly, used to the searching interviews of human rights monitors and the affirming value of giving personal testimony, had no constraints about sharing their lives with another foreign person.

Another important point is that shared language creates an assumption of understanding that may not in fact exist. When one knows that one does not understand one works harder for clarity and asks more questions. Certain dynamics are at work that help this process. The interview goes more slowly. There is time to pay attention to, and follow up, non-verbal signals. Moreover, the presence of the interpreter who was not in a sense "interested" in the

answer seemed sometimes to diffuse any tension created by answering an intimate question.

Confidentiality

Another issue was confidentiality. I made the assumption at the outset that all respondents would want anonymity because of the personal nature of their stories and, particularly for the Guatemalans, the dangers of being identified. Some respondents felt some conflict over this, feeling, understandably, that they wanted acknowledgement for their lives and what they had done. After much discussion there was agreement from all involved against identifying any of the respondents at this point, not only for the reasons mentioned but because their stories also inevitably involve other living individuals who might not wish to be recognised. The names of public figures have not been changed but those of others have.

Participant Observation

The periods of participant observation are detailed in the diary above.

I have already described in Chapter 1 how I approached this aspect of the research. In all cases field notes were kept in diary form, providing me with a written record of my

thoughts, feelings, reactions to individuals and situations as they occurred. The major issues that confronted me with all three groups were ethical. Although I had a limited budget available, strictly tied to the research, and not sufficient to pay for interviews, I was relatively better off than many of my respondents and was asking them to help me with my work without remuneration. Indeed on many occasions, they insisted that I be their guest. My inadequate solution was to cover all food and travel expenses and, where possible, to respond in kind. Thus, when asked for medical consultations by members of CERJ, I ran a small two-day clinic and travelled with one of my respondents to visit sick members of her family. I used my car in Poland and Britain to provide lifts and run errands. An additional value of such actions was to increase my sense of belonging to the communities that I was observing. These periods also made me constantly reexamine the value of my research from the point of view of its value to my respondents.

Library and Archival Work

Two kinds of reading have informed this project. One is the conceptual work that has informed my thinking and is reviewed in Chapter 3. This kind of reading has gone on constantly throughout the project as my ideas have developed and my data has pushed me to ask further questions. The

other is historical, anthropological and political, to give me as full an understanding as possible of the contexts in which individual commitment developed. As there are few published accounts of these groups, I located newsletters and archives of each group's papers, kept with different individuals, including my respondents and myself. I drew on these, supplementing this with journalistic accounts, information from the supplementary interviews described above, and background general reading.

Data Analysis

After the tapes had been transcribed, my first step was to check the transcripts against the tapes. My purpose was to begin to identify key issues and themes and simultaneously annotate for an emotional code. Listening to my respondents' voices again, rather than simply reading, reminded me of the emotional content of the interview and helped to identify parts of the narrative of significance to them. At this stage I also made a summary of each respondent's narrative that allowed for quick reference to key facts and for easy comparison.

I then embarked upon what was my basic interpretative technique: repeated reading. Firstly, to get the basic factual story and chronology of events, and, secondly, to identify topics and themes and patterns as they emerged.

I had two approaches to interpretation: firstly, to

keep an eye out for already existing topics that I had identified through reading the literature. Secondly, to note themes that emerged from the respondents' narratives that were not in pre-existing schemas. Sometimes there was an overlap when my data allowed me to expand on a concept that I had already noted in the literature. Whether the concepts and themes were new or old, my unit of analysis was everything relevant said on that topic. I would then take all the pertinent texts from different respondents on the same theme to compare and contrast. Themes included, for example: the influence of parents, the way action and ideas emerged, the respondents' moral orientation, and their attitudes to non-violence.[7]

The best way to explain this process is through explaining the emergence of two concepts: firstly, that of crucial episodes. Some of my reading had introduced me to the idea of triggering events which precipitated shifts of behaviour or attitude, but there was no consistent description of what these were or how they occurred. It seemed possible that they might be part of the engagement process. Thus my protocol included open questions about the way engagement occurred, and I prompted the respondent to relive specific instances if they considered any important. Many were able to identify such instances and some brought

---

[7] I developed my own word-processing techniques to ease this process: basically, I used a filemaker program in which to hold sections of text broken down according to key themes. Within each file, separate fields contained material on subthemes. This also allowed sections of text to be held in more than one file and for rapid comparison to be made between individuals.

them up without prompting. Through reading the transcripts I became alert to common features in these instances and, through listening to the tapes, noted common modes of narrating them. Once identified I could set them in context, identify their features, begin to examine what produced them, and compare these experiences with the experiences of those with no such episodes (see Chapter 7).

In contrast I had no preconceived ideas at all about the role of empathy in the engagement process. Its significance struck me through the repeated description of empathic experiences in Anna's transcript, although she did not use this word herself. After discovering them in one interview, I searched the other transcripts with this concept in mind, additionally alert to those formative experiences that might have contributed to empathy and to the role it played in engagement. Another category that emerged from reading the transcripts was that of the "connected self." Its appearance and its significance in affecting the respondents' ways of working pushed me first into re-reading the interviews, paying attention to the respondents' perception of themselves in relation to others, and to their "moral voice". Secondly, it led me to further reading and re-interviewing to explore these themes in more depth.

Finally, in writing up, for reasons of space I could not always quote every section of text pertinent to my argument. I have, in each case, taken the whole into account but for the purposes of exposition chosen only the

most representative quotations, making clear where they speak for the individual and where they might speak for others in the group as well. I also had to make a decision about editing. Given that half the texts are in translation I have not tried to present quotations precisely as spoken, with all breath marks and interjections. On some occasions, in order to enhance the narrative flow, I have also edited out my own clarifying or encouraging comments and some of the repetitions. However, where I have edited I have tried to remain completely true to the feel and sense of the narrative, and I have not edited out uncertainty, contradictions or inconsistency where they exist.

This brings my description of my working process to an end. I have tried to underline its responsive and interactive nature and set it in the context of the personal and political lives of myself and my respondents. I hope this transparency allows a greater understanding of the way research ideas develop and change with the passage of time.

Table 1

Research Diary

Research	Personal history	Britain	Guatemala	Poland	World Events
1980	Working as newly qualified doctor in NHS. Read Edward Thompson's *Protest and Survive*. Join newly-formed local CND group.	Exponential growth of British peace movement in response to 1979 decision to deploy cruise missiles in Britain.	Massacre of peaceful protestors in Spanish embassy. Government engaged in all-out war with indigenous population.	**August:** Strikes in Gdansk lead to birth of Solidarity	Revolution in Nicaragua puts left wing Sadinistas in power.
1981	Travel to Poland for first time (the first of regular bi-annual trips). Work in accident and emergency medicine.	**September:** Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp established outside proposed missile base.		**December:** Martial law imposed in Poland.	
1982	Resign hospital job in order to be engaged in peace movement full time and live at Greenham.	**December:** Embrace the Base action at Greenham.			
1983		**November:** Cruise missiles deployed at Greenham.	Rioss Montt in power. Massacres continue, civil patrols introduced.	Martial law lifted but conditions remain much the same.	

1984	Return to work in NHS.	Miners strike	Formation of GAM-Relatives of the Disappeared	Start of correspon-dence between Polish human rights groups and Western peace movement.	
1985	Live in Guatemala for one month, work with GAM			Formation of Wolnosc i Pokoj (WiP)	
1986	Work as doctor on Central American Peace March.		Cerezo inaugurated as first civilian president for 25 years.		Gorbachev in power in Soviet Union
1987		INF treaty signed			
1988: **Summer:** formulate research proposal: "To examine the process of engagement in social movements and the relation-ship between these processes and the forms of social movement organisa-tion." **December:** Awarded research grant.	Working as psychiatric registrar in NHS. Chair of European Nuclear Disarmament	Missile deployment exercises continue, as does Women's Peace Camp.	Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ) founded.	Polish parliament passes law allowing alternative military service. Solidarity strikes.	Continuing liberalisa-tion in Soviet Union.

1989:
January-July: background reading and archival work in UK and US
While in US learn about CERJ, and decide to focus on them

End fulltime work in NHS.

Participate in solidarity actions with Chinese students in New York.

August: Participant observation and initial Greenham interviews

Debates on nuclear modernisation.

February: Round table meetings begin.
April: Solidarity legalised

June: Massacre of non-violent protestors in Tiananmen Square, China.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki confirmed as prime minister. Forms first non-communist government in Eastern Europe since 1948. Two members of WiP elected as MPs.

Baltic republics mark 50th anniversary of Hitler-Stalin Pact with human chain from Vilnius in Lithuania to Tallinn in Estonia.

September-December: Participant observation and interviews in Poland.

November: Berlin Wall comes down. Transformations of Eastern European regimes.

1990:
January-February: Edit part of Polish research log into book form for publication.

March -April: Participant observation and interviews in Guatemala	.		Increasing violence in run up to general elections including guerilla/army actions and murder of mother of one of my respondents and eviction of his relatives from their village.	
May: further participant observation and interviews at Greenham.				
June-July: begin preliminary data analysis, archival work.	**August:** Return to full time psychiatry in NHS. Involvement in actions to prevent military intervention in the Gulf	Cruise deployment exercises end. Final warheads removed from Greenham	**December:** massacre of 11 villagers by army in Santiago Atitlan, national and international outcry results in removal of army from area.	Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait

1991		**January:** Right- wing Serrano assumes presidency.		Gulf War
April-September: Data analysis, further reading.	**March:** Tour of US with Middle East women, speaking against Gulf war.			
	July: Return to husband's home in Slovenia. Set up conflict resolution project.			**June:** War in Balkans begins with military interventio n in Slovenia.
August: Follow up interviews with subgroup of Greenham women		**August:** Greenham womens peace camp, 10th anniversary reunion at camp.		
September: Follow up interviews with subgroup WiP members.	Lecturing writing on war in the Balkans.	**October:**2nd Continental Gathering of 500 years of Indigenous and Popular Resistance, held in Guatemala.	Preparation s for General Elections. two of my respondents running as candidates.	Full-scale war between Serbia and Croatia.
October-December: Data analysis.	Move to US because of husbands' job.			
1992: January: Follow up interviews in Guatemala.				

February-June: data analysis, further reading and historical research.	**Spring:** conflict resolution workshops in Balkans.	**February:** UN finds Guatemala third worst record in world for involuntary deaths and disappearances.	**May:** War in Bosnia
	Summer: Work with Bosnian refugees in Slovenia.		
October-December: data analysis.	Campaigning for military intervention in Bosnia.	Rigoberta Menchu wins Nobel peace prize	
1993,May-present: Writing up.	**March - present:** Work with Bosnian refugees in Slovenia, plus conducting regular conflict resolution training workshops in Balkans.		

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Part 1: Coming to Commitment

The problem with any research that takes place at an interdiciplinary nexus is that vast fields of relevant literature stretch to distant horizons in every direction. Political and sociological studies of collective action, socio-psychological studies of attitude, motivation and belief formation, are all relevant, as are philosophical studies on the development of moral values and political thought. A comprehensive review of the field of "collective action" alone would require a book in itself, beginning with a lengthy semantic discussion on the problems of definition of both the term "collective action" and the related concept of "social movement".

To begin with, therefore, it seems important to sharply define the boundaries of my own field. My interest is in the **process of engagement in non-violent collective action.** I am specifically concerned with understanding those individuals who engage full time in peace and human rights movements. The groups in my study fit into Jenkins's definition of a sociopolitical movement: "organised groups attempting to bring about change in social structures", whose actions lie "outside the legitimate channels for expressing grievances, or if not actually outside these channels, use the existing channels in innovative ways". To

constitute a movement there must be "collective actions" combined with "change oriented beliefs".[1] However, as Tilly points out, any student of social movements has to face the fact that as a movement consists of three elements - population, beliefs, and action - it may be considered as enduring if only one of these elements remains stable over time. For example, the beliefs endure although they are upheld by quite different populations with quite different action repertoires. Or the action endures but with quite different meanings and carried out by different populations.[2] This latter phenomenom has been well illustrated by the example of the protest "camp": first seen as an anti-nuclear protest outside nuclear bases, then becoming a solidarity action with women in jail, an anti-war protest before and during the Gulf War, and most recently being used to challenge coalpit closures in Britain, and in the protests against new road building.

My focus has been on three particular populations rather than on belief or action per se. Thus, while shared beliefs and shared forms of action formed the initial definition of these populations, I have been concerned with how an individual's decision to take part in non-violent collective action emerges and develops, not with how different populations come to share beliefs or act in the

---

[1] J. Craig Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements", in *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, edited by Samuel L. Long (New York and London: Plenum, 1991), pp. 82--83.

[2] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilisation to Revolution* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1978), p. 10.

same way at the same time. I examine the movement as a context for engagement.

In the first part of this chapter I shall simply attempt to highlight some of the main approaches that have been used in looking at what I call the "why it happens" and "how it comes about" of collective action. My purpose is to show that, though these approaches increase our understanding of the beliefs and personal attributes of activists, of the character and structural basis of various social movements, and of how organisations themselves mobilise others to join them, very little attention has been paid to the process of individual engagement in the group, or to the specific choice of non-violence. I also hope to show that most approaches, both theoretical and empirical, have been concerned with producing a general theory of political action that has ignored the specificity of different forms of action, concerned with different issues, at different times. In addition, the literature predominantly deals with the male activist, or fails to specify whether the activist is a man or a woman, thus ignoring the impact of gender. It has thus created misundertandings and stereotypes that mask a complex and diverse process. In subsequent chapters I will draw on some additional literature specifically relevant to the issues raised by my own research.

Research in this field can not only be divided into the why and the how, but also by the unit of analysis: group, event, or individual; by whether the researcher is concerned

with macro or microprocesses; and by whether there is an underlying assumption that collective action is normal or irrational behaviour. These divisions are not clear cut and intersect with one another, but I shall, for the sake of simplicity, initially divide them into the macro and micro.

Macro Approaches

Kornhauser's theory of "The Mass Society" is an example of a macro approach that sees social movements as abnormal. He is particularly concerned to explain the structural conditions of modern society that make it vulnerable to the emergence of "anti-democratic movements", that is, those conditions that are most conducive to the growth of a "mass society". His theory rests heavily on a Durkheimian analysis of society that sees rapid differentiation resulting in disequilibrium and "anomie". In brief, his thesis is that at times of rapid social transition - such as occur with the sudden introduction of democratic rule after a long period of autocracy, or when there is rapid urbanisation, rapid industrialisation, or massive population movements - there is a breakdown of traditional social structures, institutions and associations, and of values and cultural norms. This results in atomised, alienated, marginalised individuals who are vulnerable to "mobilisation by mass-oriented elites" and elites that are vulnerable to

penetration by mass movements.[3]

While the theory may have some value in explaining the emergence of totalitarian movements - for example, the emergence of fascism in interwar Germany - Kornhauser makes clear that he regards any extra-constitutional action as "mass politics" and therefore anti-democratic.[4] In stable political democracies political elites should be protected from any "ad hoc interference" in their functioning, their only constraint being their vulnerability to electoral choice at the ballot box. This highly conservative view of any kind of social movement as a manifestation of social pathology ignores the regulative and democratising role played by non-violent civil disobedience[5] and is not born out by empirical research.

Numerous studies have shown that, at least in liberal democracies, it is the "better educated, more sophisticated, more interested [and] knowledgeable about politics, . . . more subjectively efficacious", who are likely to engage in "radical activism" (that is protests, demonstrations, civil

---

[3] W. Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 33 ff. There is a micro element in the focus on atomised and marginal "man" and his quest for community. But "man" here is a generalisation, not the subject of individual study.

[4] Ibid., p. 22.

[5] John Rawls, "The Justification of Civil Disobedience", in *Civil Disobedience: Theory and Practise*, ed. Hugo Adam Bedau (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1969).

disobedience and, rarely, riots).[6] Moreover, far from being marginalised newcomers, those engaged are likely to be long-term residents of their communities, more sociable, central to their social networks, more engaged in group activities in general, and to have a higher socioeconomic status.[7] Marsh, in his large-scale study of British protest behaviour, makes it clear that those engaged in protest view it as an extension of, rather than an alternative to, orthodox political behaviour.[8]

In contrast to Kornhauser, many Marxists[9] see collective action as the normal and rational expression of the conflict of interests within society. Their analysis sees social movements as primarily class based. Classes are defined in terms of their relationship to the means of production, and collective action arises when a particular class becomes conscious of common interests and mobilises to defend them. One of the main critiscisms of this approach is that "material or class interests defined by economic relations are not the exclusive source of the conflicting interests that underlie movements".[10] New cleavages are

---

[6] Lester W. Milbrath, "Political Participation", in *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, ed. Samuel L. Long (New York and London: Plenum, 1981), p. 218.

[7] Ibid., p. 224.

[8] Alan Marsh, *Protest and Political Conciousness*, Sage Library of Social Research 49 (London: Sage Publications, 1977).

[9] I make no attempt to explore the diverse currents of Marxism here, merely to indicate a general trend.

[10] Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements", p. 110.

emerging around ethnicity, gender, access to political power, and value orientations such as attitudes to the environment, all of which cut across class lines. Some theorists have attempted to solve this by extending or modifying the concept of class to include these new groupings. The underlying assumption remains that "individuals participate in collective action because they belong to a specific social sector which is exposed to the contradictory requirements of complex systems."[11]

This approach and its limitations is exemplified by Jonas in *The Battle for Guatemala*. Her book is a comprehensive analysis of the structural conditions that have produced the various forms of collective struggle in Guatemala in the last half century. She argues that the skewed land distribution, the expropriation of resources, ethnic discrimination, and the combined effects of continuing economic crisis and war have all produced a marginalised and impoverished majority who, since the late 1980s, have mobilised to challenge the dominant minority. (I explore this in more detail in Chapter 5.) She acknowledges and describes the complex, diverse, but "convergent" interests of the "popular bloc", a term she substitutes for class to incorporate ethnic and gender dimensions. What is not explained is why, given the 87 per cent majority now subject to these structural conditions, they do not all mobilise, nor why different groupings choose

---

[11] Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), p. 216.

different methods.[12] As Melucci complains, this form of explanation "derives the meaning of action from its analysis of the social conditons that the actors appear to have in common, . . . while the gap between 'objective conditions' and the empirically observed collective behaviour proves impossible to explain. Marx's old problem - how to explain how a 'class-in -itself' becomes a 'class-for-itself' - remains in the background unsolved".[13]

Resource mobilisation theory (RMT) attempts to resolve the problem by moving away from the question of why collective action occurs to a focus on how "social movement organisations" use various "resources", such as access to finance, media, skilled elites, and social networks, to mobilise support. McCarthy and Zald, for example, argue that "there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass roots support for a movement if the movement is effectively organised and has at its disposal the power and resources of some established elite group". They also state that "grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs".[14] RMT theorists distinguish between social movements which share beliefs, and social movement organisations (SMO) which are "complex or formal organisations which identify [their]

---

[12] Susanne Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala* (Boulder: Westview, 1991).

[13] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, p. 18.

[14] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: a Partial Theory", *American Journal of Sociology* 82, (May 1977), pp. 1212--1241.

goals with the preferences of a social movement . . . and attempt to implement those goals."[15] "The amount of activity directed towards goal accomplishment is, crudely, a function of the resources controlled by the organisation."[16] The theory makes the point that movement "beneficiaries" may not be identical with the "conscience constituents, individual and organisational" who provide major sources of support. Thus it acknowledges at the outset the diverse nature of membership. The theory offers a refreshing challenge, in its emphasis on the mobilisation "process", both to those groups of theories concerned only with individual motivation (see below) and to those based on socio-structural conditions. Regarding the latter, "society provides the infrastructure which social movement industries utilise", including aspects such as communications, pre-existing networks, and "degree of access to institutional centres".[17]

The problem with RMT, however, is, firstly, that the heavy emphasis on pre-existing elites and networks ignores those groups that appear to come into existence initially without either. Secondly, while it acknowledges individual diversity in the SMOs, because no attention is paid to individual motivation or the meaning of the action, the sources of this diversity are not explored (although the impact of diversity is: for example, conflict within the group). Thirdly, while the theory attempts to explain

---

[15] Ibid., p. 1218.

[16] Ibid., p. 1216.

[17] Ibid., p. 1217.

growth and development, the pre-existence of the SMO or of Gamson's "challenging group"[18] is taken for granted, with no exploration of how initial engagement occurred.

This is the main problem underlying all the macro approaches, whether based on assumptions about social conflict, social breakdown or access to resources. They treat the social movement as a "unified datum", a "character . . . endowed with being and purpose"[19], ignoring the plurality of values, opinions, meanings, and perspectives that converge in any given case.

Micro Approaches

One way to get at the diversity and complexity of collective action is to shift the focus to the micro level of the individual. Paradoxically, however, social psychologists who do this have generally used their studies of individual personality, motivation, belief and behaviour to produce empirically based generalisations, continuing the search for a unifying explanatory model. Such a search has taken a variety of forms that are worth examining in a little more detail. I identify six distinct approaches:

1) psychopathological

2) personality trait

---

[18] William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1990), pp. 14 ff.

[19] Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, p. 25.

3) relative deprivation

4) life cycle

5) socialisation

6) cognitive and emotive

Obviously these approaches overlap but, for the sake of clarity, I will separate them out.

1) The **psychopathological** approach draws heavily upon psychoanalytic theory. This rests on the assumption that much human adult behaviour can only be understood by reference to the unconscious, whose urges, wishes and defences are themselves largely determined by early childhood experiences.

The impact of this work in trying to understand political behaviour is best exemplified by Harold Lasswell, whose argument is summed up in his formula:

p } d } r = P

"Where p equals private motives; d equals displacement onto a public object; r equals rationalisation in terms of public interest; P equals the political man; and } equals transformed into."[20] The psychoanalytic theory of repression is crucial to Lasswell's argument: all individuals repress memories with unacceptable emotional connotations, and in all cases such repressed and unconscious impulses remain dynamic and seek an outlet. It

---

[20] Harold Lasswell, *The Political Writings of Harold D. Lasswell* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1951), pp. 74--77.

is the act of rationalising such impulses in terms of public interest that transforms the private into the political man.

Through the study of detailed psychobiographies Lasswell explains particular forms of political behaviour as manifestations of the unconscious and irrational motivations produced by childhood experience. Thus the "love for the downtrodden and for humanity" expressed by the political agitator and pacifist A (the closest Lasswell comes to describing a social movement activist), is a rationalisation of the "reactive displacement of his own brother hostility",[21] while his "wild assaults and defiances" are related to his latent homosexual urge and to his "desire to provoke the social environment into attacking him and thus to gratify powerful unconscious drives", namely, "to be forced into a passive, feminine, victimised role and to inflict upon himself the punishment which he deserved for excessive hatred of others." Miss G, the sole female in the study and an activist who "supports all kinds of measures, particularly for the emancipation of women from the domination of men" has "an enormous masculine complex" and "sought out politics as a career as a means of expressing the male role of dominance, a drive which was powerfully organised in her early childhood experience."[22]

Lasswell's work makes depressing reading. His attitude to his interviewees is pejorative and disparaging and ridden with patriarchal assumptions. For example, the desire by a

---

[21] Ibid., p. 93.

[22] Ibid., pp. 121--124.

girl for a single child is actually the manifestation of the unconcious wish for a penis, while cooking and sewing is a manifestation of pathology in a boy. The subject's response to the analysis is never given. One wonders if it was ever shared with them. Most significantly for present purposes, the meaning and process of political engagement is never explored. Indeed, although there is rich detail on childhood and intra-familial experience, only the vaguest generalisations are made about the nature of the activists' political involvements and the historical, social and political context in which they occurred. The only role of history is in the random provision of the "public obects" onto which rationalised, unconscious feelings may be displaced.

Not surprisingly, given the irrational basis of political action that he postulates, Lasswell's political world is violent and conflictive. "Politics is found wherever 'wills' are in conflict."[23] And "the prominence of hate in politics suggests that . . . the most important private motive is a repressed and powerful hatred of authority."[24] Moreover, the implications of his thesis are profoundly anti-democratic. "The individual is a poor judge of his own interests", and his choice of political policy is merely the "irrelevant palliative" by which "he attempts to relieve his own disorders", while the only useful role for political agitation and discussion is as a form of

---

[23] Ibid., p. 44.

[24] Ibid., p. 75.

catharsis. And Lasswell argues for a "preventative politics" that depends not on "democratic discussion" but on the application of lessons learnt from the behavioural sciences, particularly psychopathology.[25]

To summarise: for Lasswell the activist is a deviant who functions in a historical vacuum. There is no sense that war, hunger and exploitation may be genuine human problems to which people respond. They are merely the fortuitous symbols onto which people displace their disordered affects and it is this displacement apparently that gives political movements their vitality.

I will deal in more detail with Lasswell's approach and the way my own research challenges his thesis in Chapter 8, where I look at the role of particularly traumatic experiences in activists' lives.

2) Separate from, but related to the **psychopathological** tradition, is the tradition which examines **personality traits**. This has usually been done by the use of cross-sectional surveys that look for an association between "activism" and a particular trait. Gergen and Ullman critically reviewed a large body of this work, focussing particularly on studies looking at social movement activists.[26] They found that positive correlations had been demonstrated between activism and aggression/hostility, high

---

[25] Ibid., pp. 194--199.

[26] Kenneth J. Gergen and Mathew Ullman, "Socialisation and the Characterological Basis of Political Activism", in *The Handbook of Political Socialization,* ed. Stanley Allen Renshon (New York: Free Press, 1977) pp. 411--442.

need for group affiliation, and altruism. More specifically, right wing activists showed a high need for conformity, left wing ones a low need and a greater need for autonomy. No correlations were found with alienation, and the picture of the relationship with self esteem, power and dominance, authoritarian personality, optimism and pessimism, and distrust was quite unclear due to very disparate results from different studies. There were also studies that challenged the strong relationships defined above.

The problem with this body of work is that is based on some dubious tacit assumptions. The first is that demonstrating an association implies a causal link, for example: aggressive unconforming individuals are more likely to become activists. Causality cannot be established by this kind of cross-sectional work. As Gergen and Ullman point out:

> The reverse possibility is seldom discussed. Yet in most cases the possibility that political participation may influence personal dispositions is not only plausible, but compelling: for example, if a political movement emphasises the use of aggression or is conflict prone, participation could well influence the participant scores on an aggression indicator. Similarly, depending on the character of the movement, the individual could well be moved toward greater optimism (or pessimism), affiliation, alienation, distrust, altruism self esteem, and the like. . . . Social psychological literature documents the effects of behavioural engagement or role playing on subsequent psychological dispositions. There is little reason to suspect that involvement in political groups is not similarly effective. The possibility is indeed unsettling that most of the uniformity encountered in our review stems from just such effects.

Thus, it is not that activism arises from certain personality types but that it may actually produce them.

This relates to the second point of criticism which applies both to the trait and the psychoanalytic approach. The assumption that stable and enduring personality traits are acquired in early childhood by various socialisation processes is not necessarily correct. Firstly, particular traits may be more evident in some situations than others. Gergen summarises his own research, showing, for example, how self esteem fluctuates according to whether one is interacting with others considered inferior or superior and according to the amount of expressed social approval. Such situational variance may well account for the very disparate results in correlational studies.[27] Secondly, there is increasing evidence that personality as a whole is not a fixed given, rather, it appears to be flexible and protean.[28] Individuals are capable of being many thing to many people, including themselves. They are also capable of enormous shifts and changes in response to external circumstances and to their relationships with others.

Finally, Mischel reviewed studies in which personality factors have been used to predict behaviour and found that "personality variables seldom account for more than 10 per

---

[27] Ibid., p. 436.

[28] Kenneth Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (Basic Books: New York, 1991); and Robert Jay Lifton, *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

cent of the observed behaviour."[29] Gergen and Ullman state that in the studies reviewed by them the figure is similar:

> Given the relative triviality of personality indicators in predicting behaviour, it has seemed apparent to many that factors arising in the immediate personal situation may be far more powerful determinants than whatever personal dispositions the individual caries about with him. In effect, political participation may be far better understood in terms of the immediate life circumstances facing that individual rather than in terms of his or her early background: e.g. the participation of close friends, the costs incurred at home, the convenience of committing oneself, the immediate promise of action or change.[30]

3) Tedd Gurr also saw political action arising primarily out of an individual's motivational state. In his view the main motivation was the frustration produced by a state of **relative deprivation** which, finding no alternative outlet, was transformed into aggression that led to collective acts of political violence. Gurr was attempting to address the difficulty posed by the fact that it is not those suffering the worst structural conditions that rebel. He argued that the significant factor in producing frustration was:

> the perceived discrepancy between mens' value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life

---

[29] Walter Mischel, *Personality and Assessment* (New York: Wiley, 1968), quoted in Gergen and Ullman, "Socialisation and the Characterological Basis of Political Activism", in *The Handbook of Political Socialization,* ed. Stanley Allen Renshon (New York: Free Press, 1977), p. 436.

[30] Ibid., p. 436.

> to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining given the social means available to them. Societal conditions that increase the average level or intensity of expectations without increasing capabilities increase the intensity of discontent."[31]

This can happen when rising expectations outstrip the "resources and institutions that determine their capabilities", the "revolution of rising frustrations" that occurs, for example, when non-western groups are exposed to the higher material living standard of the West.[32] When there is a gap between the capability for obtaining these values and the expectations of doing so, the potential for discontent and frustration rises, the greater and more intense the sense of discontent, the greater the potential for political violence. Gurr pointed out that

> many of the attitudes and societal conditions that facilitate political violence may be present and relatively unchanging in society over a long period; they become relevant only when the relative deprivation increases in scope and intensity. Intense politicised discontent also can be widespread and persistent over a long period without overt manifestation because a regime monopolises coercive control and institutional support.[33]

Moreover, whether the potential for collective

---

[31] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p 13.

[32] Ibid., pp. 93--94.

[33] Ibid., p. 233.

violence would be transformed into political violence depended on the degree to which it was perceived as justified, which depended on the normative values and ideological underpinnings of society, such as loyalty to the state, socialisation processes, and the tradition of violence within society.

Thus Gurr acknowledged the importance of external political, social and ideological conditions as facilitating or inhibiting collective action, but insisted that the frustration aggression hypothesis was central. Leaving it out from an understanding of political violence was like leaving out the law of gravity from the theory of flight.[34] Gurr's theory was not just concerned with collective violence. Gurr made it clear that a similar analysis could be applied to less violent but still disruptive acts, such as demonstrations and other forms of non-violent action.

There are a number of problems with Gurr's approach, not least the difficulty of operationalising the concept of relative deprivation. Gurr's method is based on the "the juxtaposition and generalisation of relationships observed in studies of political violence and of the individual behaviours manifest in it."[35] Basically, using socio-historical material, he assumes that relative deprivation has occurred if there is evidence of the objective conditions supposed to produce it, such as a sudden increase in taxes or a rapid rise in the cost of

---

[34] Ibid., pp. 36--37.

[35] Ibid., p. 17.

living. Then he looks for an association with outbreaks of political violence, which, not surprisingly, he finds. But there is no possibility of knowing whether those engaged in action actually felt deprived or frustrated at the time. Other empirical studies do not support the theory: for example, Hibb's massive study of political disorders in 108 countries over two decades found no correlation with relative deprivation (objectively measured in the way described above). It was the factors identified by Gurr as facilitative, that is, the degree of repression and institutional support, that were more significant.[36] Work on Black riots in the 1960s found no independent relationship between relative and absolute grievances and a tendency to riot.[37] Moreover, studies based on attempts to measure a subjective sense of deprivation and associate it with the tendency to riot have not demonstrated any causal link either.[38]

Another problem is that, as with the work on personality traits, most studies attempt to demonstrate the

---

[36] D. Hibbs, *Mass Political Violence* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), cited by J. Craig Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements", in *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, edited by Samuel L. Long (New York and London: Plenum, 1991), pp. 100-101.

[37] Seymour Spilerman, *The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations* (Madison University of Wisconsin, 1969), cited by J. Craig Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements", in *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, edited by Samuel L. Long (New York and London: Plenum, 1991).

[38] Michael Billig, *Social Psychology and Intergroup Relations*, European Monographs in Social Psychology, no. 9 (London: Academic Press in cooperation with the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology, 1976) p. 159.

existence of relative deprivation after the movement has come into existence, and fail to ask if its supporters shared this feeling before becoming engaged.[39] Just as political engagement may help to develop a certain form of personality, the experience of a sense of relative deprivation may actually be a product of the activities of a movement that articulates grievances not previously understood.

A more fundamental critique of the relative deprivation theory is made by Billig, who challenges the hypothesis that aggression is always the product of frustration: he points out that there is clear evidence that aggressive behaviour may be learned and purposive. In addition, he argues, there is an ideological bias, similar to Lasswell's and Kornhauser's, that presupposes a harmonious society which is sometimes disrupted by irrational acts of political violence.[40] Such a bias is clearly demonstrated by Gurr's comment that his study is an attempt to explain "our occasional disposition to disrupt violently the order we otherwise work so hard to maintain."[41]

Billig also points to the dangers of applying theories derived from interpersonal psychology to intergroup work, a critique that is relevant to all the psychological theories discussed so far. Even in the psychology laboratory, the subject's hypothesised internal motivational state does not

---

[39] Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements", p. 103.

[40] Michael Billig, *Social Psychology*, p. 128.

[41] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, p. 7.

occur in a social vacuum. Context, beliefs and interpretations all codetermine his choice of action.[42] "The cognitive interpretation of the deprivations and frustrations suffered by ingroup members must provide the basis for a determined social action. Without the coherence provided by an ingroup ideology, frustrations will merely produce individual reactions; these will take diffuse forms and will not be vehicles for mass social change."[43]

4) Lifecycle theorists, such as Feuer in his *Conflict of Generations*, try to have it both ways. On the one hand, Feuer regards collective action by young people, specifically students, as a natural and necessary process by which society regenerates itself. "The conflict of generations . . . is a driving force of history."[44] On the other, it is the students' failure to recognise that their rebellion has nothing to do with the actual structural conditions of their society, but is actually based on powerful primordial urges, that produces the negative and destructive aspects of every rebellion. He contrasts the irrational emotionality of various student movements to the rational behaviour of, for example, the labour movement.

> Student movements . . . are born of vague

---

[42] Michael Billig, *Social Psychology*, p. 149.

[43] Ibid., p. 156. Billig defines ideology as "the pattern of beliefs about the social world and about the possibilities for social action".

[44] Lewis Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations: the Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 527.

> undefined emotions which seek for some issue, some cause to which to attach themselves, a complex of urges - altruism, idealism, revolt, self sacrifice and self destruction - searches the social order for a strategic avenue of expression.[45]

Moreover, when the student finds a "carrier movement", such as peasants or the working class, the "emotions issuing from the student's unconscious, and deriving from the conflict of generations . . . deflect it in irrational directions.

Solidarity with the suffering is not, for Feuer, a genuine response to perceived distress but simply the result of the "guilt of . . . the would-be parricide" which can only be conquered through a demonstration of selflessness and the "winning of the comforting maternal love of the oppressed".[46] The psychoanalytic language is reminiscent of Lasswell both in its ahistoricity and in its reduction of the building of solidarity and connection to psychopathology. And the question remains as to why all youth in every generation do not revolt. Feuer's answer is to concede a minimal role to structural and historical conditions: there must be a society with a "gerontocratic order",[47] that is, where power and wealth remain in the hands of an older generation which has lost legitimacy with the younger generation, for example, through military defeat.

Erikson's explanations of the outburst of youth and

---

[45] Ibid., pp. 8--10.

[46] Ibid., p. 530.

[47] Ibid., p. 12.

student activism in the 1960s, and of the lives of Martin Luther and Gandhi, are rooted in a lifecycle approach. However, in contrast to Feuer, he does not regard political and ideological engagement as pathological or irrational and does see it as firmly embedded in history. Although working in the psychoanalytic tradition, Erikson does not regard adult behaviour as predetermined by early life experience. Indeed, he regrets the way psychoanalysis has "lifted to the rank of a cosmology the undeniable fact that man's adulthood contains a persistent childishness: that vistas of the future always reflect the mirages of a missed past". And he is dismayed at the "widespread fatalism according to which man is nothing but a multiplication of his parents' faults". He sees the psyche in constant interaction with historical circumstances and as continuing to develop throughout the life cycle. Thus, human personality is "a combination of capacities created in the distant past and of opportunities divined in the present; a combination of totally unconscious preconditions developed in individual growth and of social conditions created and recreated in the precarious interplay of generations".[48] The life cycle is marked by a series of psychosocial crises in which the individual faces up to the tasks appropriate for that stage of development. For example the "identity crisis" is that stage when:

> Each youth must forge for himself some central

---

[48] Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther, A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 18--19.

> perspective and direction, some working unity out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood. . . . In some young people, in some classes, at some periods in history, this crisis will be minimal; in other people, classes, and periods, the crisis will be clearly marked off as a critical period, a kind of "second birth" apt to be aggravated either by widespread neuroticisms or by pervasive ideological unrest.[49]

In the mid- and late 1960s Erikson saw the particular quantitative and qualitative changes in North American life, such as the growth of mass communication, better education, the growing autonomy of youth, and the growing threat of nuclear war, as creating a form of historical crisis to which youth were peculiarly sensitive because of their own developmental crises.[50] Similarly, Martin Luther's prolonged identity crisis coincided with a "political and psychological vacuum" in the Catholic church. For Erikson, in both cases, resolution of the political crises through ideological commitment is intimately intertwined with resolution of the personal crisis. In marked contrast to Lasswell, he does not see this as the irrational displacement of an unconscious affect created by the personal crisis. On the contrary, he states that

> We cannot separate personal growth and communal change, nor can we separate the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crisis in

---

[49] Ibid., p. 14.

[50] Erik H. Erikson, *Life History and the Historical Moment* (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 196--199.

> historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other. In fact, the whole interplay between the psychological and the social, the developmental and the historical could be conceptualised only as a kind of *psychosocial relativity*.[51]

Hence the use of the term psychohistory. And, in an interesting reversal, he suggests that at moments of particular historic crisis, like the 1960s, it is the "inverted dissenters", those who are sensitive to the problems but too sick and too isolated for "joint dissent", who are in fact the "patients".[52]

It is important to note a serious limitation to the work. As Gilligan points out, the lifecycle that he delineates, with its emphasis on the process of individuation rather than on the development of relationship, is a male lifecycle.[53] Therefore its appropriateness in helping understand the emergence of female political engagement may be limited. In addition, Erikson's focus in the Gandhi and Luther studies is on the development of the exceptional man, not the collective actor. Erikson's work is significant, however, not only for its pathbreaking attempt to bridge the gap between the historical and the personal, but because of the attention paid to process. Both *Young Man Luther* and *Gandhi's Truth*

---

[51] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (London: Faber, 1968), p. 23.

[52] Erik H. Erikson, *Life History*, p. 196.

[53] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

examine the emergence of political and religious commitment through the use of psychobiography and history. I shall draw on his findings about the emergence of commitment in Chapter 7.

5) The most thorough challenge to the 'oedipal rebellion/activist as deviant hypotheses' came from the large body of empirical studies done on the youth and student activists of the 1960s. In this work the focus is still the individual activist but the concern is less with internal motivational state or personality traits and more with the processes of socialisation. The socialisation literature, looking at the background of activists through both quantitative and qualitative biographical studies was mainly concerned with identifying the personal, cultural and historical backgrounds from which activists emerged.

The focus was rather narrow, primarily addressing the issues of family background, childrearing practises, ideological continuity, and family conflict. In addition, some interest was shown in the childhood behaviour and personalities of the activists, and at what age activism emerged. In one study the possibility that the activists' perception of their childhoods could be altered by current engagement was checked by examining parental perceptions of the same period. A remarkable degree of concordance between parents and children was found, suggesting that the memories were stable and reliable.[54]

---

[54] Richard Flacks, "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest", *Journal of Social Issues* 23 (1967), pp. 52--75.

It is worth summarising the main findings. Student activists of the 1960s were not marginal but came from an "elite" group. They tended to be the most gifted students, while their parents had high socioeconomic status, high levels of education, and had professional, particularly "helping," careers. Male activists were particularly influenced by mothers' values and expectations, and the fact that many mothers were in nurturant professions was not insignificant.[55] Activists showed continuity with parental values, if not with parents' political beliefs. Marked discontinuity and rebellion was more likely to be associated with alienation and political withdrawal. Values also appeared to have been handed down over more than one generation. And "the dominant socialization pattern" was "not permissiveness but a highly principled family culture which is transmitted to children through the use of reasoning and persuasion and the encouragement of independence in thought and action."[56]

This is a brief summary of a complex body of research. It is particularly interesting to note that the presence of family conflict discriminates between activist and inactivist and between different types of activist. Non-constructive activism appears to be associated with the

---

[55] Margaret M. Braungart and Richard R. Braungart, "The Life-Course Development of Left- and Right-Wing Youth Activist Leaders from the 1960s", *Political Psychology* 11 (1990), pp. 254--258, and Kenneth Keniston, *Youth and Dissent: The Rise of a New Opposition* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), pp. 219-221.

[56] Keniston, *Youth and Dissent,* p. 276.

most conflictive and negative relationships to parents. In contrast to Lasswell's view, suppression of conflict is associated with inactivity.

Other work has shown that the presence of family conflict helps to distinguish between those who have a belief and those who act on it. Cowdry studied the consistency between action and belief and the determinants of this consistency. The advantages of his study were that by looking at a homogenous male student population (a random sample of 450 male seniors), he was able to control for many demographic variables - intelligence and class specialisation, for example - and focus on one specific issue: attitudes and action taken with regard to the Vietnam war. The study looked at attitudes to the war and plans for service, and also, because of the circulation during the study of a strongly worded anti-war petition, it was able to examine the relationship between these attitudes and the action of signing the petition. He found that consistency - that is, acting upon anti-war beliefs by signing, or on pro-war beliefs by not signing - was related to reported "family harmony, compatibility and respect." Anti-war nonsigners reported more parental disharmony, lower respect for parents and more conflict with their fathers. Consistent students appeared to have a more positive perception of and relationship with their fathers. He suggests that the inconsistent subject from a more conflicted family has learnt early the value of keeping his

thoughts to himself.[57] The significance of Cowdry's work is that it shows the importance of distinguishing belief and action and that family constellation may have more effect on consistency between belief and action than on the beliefs themselves.

None of the authors cited claim that the variables studied are predictive. The fact remains that activism in the 1960s was a minority phenomenom: the majority, with similar backgrounds, were not active, while there were others, not from this subculture, who were. Thus the Braungarts emphasise the importance of the intersection between family background and other socialising experiences, such as teachers, books, and peers, and of all of these with life cycle and historical events, each of these having a different emphasis in different individuals. The interaction is what is significant. The Braungarts suggest that the political ideology of parents tended to form a lens through which historical events of childhood were seen and on the basis of which the events were regarded as significant. Thus, right wing students remembered the Hungarian uprising, left wing ones the Cuban missile crisis.[58]

Keniston's thorough review of 300 of these studies

---

[57] R. William Cowdry, Kenneth Keniston, and Seymour Cabin, "The War and Military Obligation: Private Attitudes and Public Actions", *Journal of Pesonality* 38 (December 1970), pp. 525-549.

[58] Braungart and Braungart, "The Life-Course Development of Left- and Right-Wing Youth Activist Leaders", pp. 278--280.

points to a number of failings, one of the the main ones being the failure to address both the specificity and the diversity of student activism. For example, studies using behavioural criteria often failed to recognise that an activist does not necessarily "hold the same views as all the other students active in the same cause at the same time",[59] nor does he or she have the same motivational base and degree of commitment as his or her colleagues. There is a tendency to try and impose inappropriate categorisations like "right" and "left" and to ignore the significance of conflicting views over tactics. He also points to the way the social movement, at different stages in its lifecycle, draws on a quite different social base. Mankoff and Flacks, for example, have shown that first and second generation protestors are not the same, and that, as the movement grows, there is a widening of the social base and it is less easy to distinguish activists from their inactive counterparts.[60] All of this points to the impossibility of arriving at a general picture of the political activist and to an increasing need for a sharp focus: what kind of activist, what issue, in what kind of time and place? It is the qualitative studies that provide this focus.

For example, Coles's study of US civil rights activists does show that some of the above holds true at least for the

---

[59] Kenneth Keniston, *Youth and Dissent*, p. xi.

[60] Milton Mankoff and Richard Flacks, "The Changing Basis of The American Student Movement", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 395 (May 1971), pp. 54--67.

three Black activists in his study. None come from overtly political families, but one gets a picture of all of them living out values learnt from their parents, particularly their mothers. Fred, for example, insisted on going to a white school. His father, who had struggled against the odds to create his own business, was against it. His mother "was on my side. . . . My dad agreed with her underneath, he really did." Another's father "spoke of freedom. He would tell me that so long as we weren't on relief we were free." Hard work, self respect and ethical standards were important in these families. Their children translated this into full-time struggle for emancipation.[61]

Andrews's study of lifetime English socialists whose politicisation mainly occurred in the 1930s found that her working class activists came from left wing or apolitical families, while the middle class ones were from politically liberal families. Apart from the two children whose parents were active socialists, it is again the transmission of values that seems important: Ed, for example, was raised in an environment in which the expression of deep commitment - of a totally unpolitical nature - was part of daily life. Frida's cultured, academic parents sheltered Jewish refugees.[62]

One of the fullest descriptions of activists'

---

[61] Robert Coles, *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear* (London: Faber, 1964), pp. 173--238.

[62] Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment: Aging, Politics, Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 81--82.

childhoods is Keniston's study of 'young radicals'. He notes that, while their experiences were enormously diverse, "what distinguished virtually all of them was a feeling, from an early age, of being somehow different, separate, apart and exceptional, a self characterisation which they viewed ambivalently".[63] Frank and Nash also identified this sense of difference in the peace activists that they studied, the majority of whom felt their families were "not completely typical of the surrounding community".[64] Keniston sees this sense of alienness as partly a result of belonging to that different ethnic or ideological subculture identified by Flacks, and also because of early intellectual excellence which put them into an intellectual elite and gave them sociopolitical and moral precocity. The sense of difference did not isolate them. They were sociable, outgoing, popular children, frequently elected as form leaders and their memories were of happy childhoods. Adolescence was much more troubled, characterised by more marked periods of alienation, self conciousness and, in contrast to childhood, by feelings of loneliness and isolation. There were frequent conflicts with parents, particularly over the parents' perceived hypocrisy. Some made abortive suicide attempts; others came close to despair. Yet, paradoxically, these feelings were coupled

---

[63] Keniston, *Youth and Dissent,* p. 221.

[64] Jerome D.Frank and Earl H. Nash, "Commitment to Peace Work: A Preliminary Study of Determinants and Sustainers of Behaviour Change", *American Journal Of OrthoPsychiatry,* 35 (1965) pp. 106--119.

with continued good functioning and outward success. These were resilient children marked by their psychological strength and ability to come through their difficulties.

What also comes across from Andrews and Keniston is that political awareness and activism of some kind begins early. In the families of political activists, like the Glaswegian Rose Kerrigan, the daughter of Jewish socialists, this could be overt, public, political action. Rose was campaigning for a rent strike at the age of twelve. [65] For most, however, it was engagement in discussions about politics at home and some form of social or local political engagement. Keniston's radicals, as pre-adolescents, stood up for bullied children or led opposition to school drills for protection against atomic attack, and frequently took and defended dissenting views.

These findings challenge Adelson's view that children's political ideas, in particular the "sense of community", only fully develop in late adolescence. He investigated this problem by presenting groups of children, with ages ranging from eleven to eighteen, with a series of political philosophical problems regarding the organisation and governance of a hypothetical community on an island. He concluded that "younger adolescents are usually insensitive to individual liberties and opt for authoritarian solutions to political problems - at the same time they are unable to achieve a differentiated view of the social order and thus cannot grasp the legitimate claims of the community upon the

---

[65] Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment*, p. 80.

citizen".[66] Rose Kerrigan clearly had a sense of community from an early age and Keniston's activist youngsters had a coherent concept of individual rights.

One explanation for working class activists may well be that their moral and political precocity comes from the absence of an adolescence. All Andrews' working class activists were working by the age of 14, and most had been in some caring or supportive role to the rest of the family from a much younger age. Andrews herself argues that, while formative experiences occurred early, actual socialist consciousness came later. For the "young radicals", Keniston suggests that they came from a sub-culture encouraging moral and political precocity.

At whatever age political consciousness develops, the picture of these activists as children is of resilience, intellectual ability and basic psychological health. This stands in marked contrast to the childhoods of the activists described by Lasswell. These children are politically and morally precocious and seem to be particularly sensitive to, and have clear memories of, historical and political events. They later see these memories as crucial in influencing later behaviour. I will look at the significance of these findings in Chapter 6.

6) The **cognitive and emotional approach.** The next wave of interest in activism shifted the focus rather than

---

[66] Joseph Adelson and Robert P. O'Neil, "Growth of Political Ideas in Adolescence: The Sense of Community", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 4 (1966), pp. 295--306.

sharpened it. The concern was no longer with explaining the emergence of a whole generation of activists but in trying to understand different responses to a particular issue: the "threat" of nuclear war. In fact, the literature on antinuclear activism in the 1980s should be seen in the context of what almost constitutes a new subdiscipline: nuclear psychology. (And some psychologists would see the generation of this research as their own form of political engagement with an issue.) Large numbers of studies have been done on subjects that range from the psychological factors contributing to the risk of accidental nuclear war to cross cultural comparisons of children's responses to the nuclear threat.

Although not directly concerned with activists, this last area produced some results that are indirectly pertinent to the issues raised above: that is, whether protest is a form of pathology and deviance and what are its associations with self efficacy. For example, some work suggested that "nuclear anxiety" was positively associated with poor mental health, in particular drug use, depression and powerlessness, and inversely related to self esteem, perceived purpose in life and overall life satisfaction. [67] The implication is that if worrying about the nuclear threat is conducive to poor mental health then acting on it is

---

[67] M. D. Newcomb, "Nuclear Attitudes and Reactions: Associations with Depression, Drug Use and Quality of Life", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986), pp. 906--920, quoted in Robert T. Schatz and Susan T. Fiske, "International Reactions to the Threat of Nuclear War: The Rise and Fall of Concern in the Eighties", *Political Psychology* 13 (1992), p. 10.

likely to be so as well. However, Newcomb's construct of "nuclear anxiety" has been criticised for including beliefs and attitudes as well as feelings, and for referring to a variety of nuclear issues.[68] And a substantial amount of other work contradicts his findings. Goldberg and others found, in a survey of more than 2000 Canadian 7-to-12 year olds, that worrying frequently about nuclear war was

> not associated with feelings of helplessness but, rather, with a greater sense of social efficacy and more involvement with personal job and career plans, while those who denied any fears on this subject were the most helpless and the least interested in planning their personal futures.[69]

These findings were confirmed by Solantaus in her study of 2100 adolescents in Finland. She found that there was a positive relationship between anxiety about the nuclear threat and discussions about war and peace; and that those who were anxious and discussed the subject had a greater sense of self efficacy, that is they felt more confident of their ability to contribute to the prevention of war. Those with very high or very low levels of anxiety had a reduced sense of self efficacy. Both groups of authors stress that there is no way of assessing which factor comes first. The suggestion is that greater worry may lead to sharing the

---

[68] Robert T. Schatz and Susan T. Fiske, "International Reactions to the Threat of Nuclear War: the Rise and Fall of Concern in the Eighties", Political Psychology, 13 (1992), pp. 11--29.

[69] Susan Goldberg et al., "Thinking About the Threat of Nuclear War: Relevance to Mental Health", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 55, 4 (October 1985), pp. 503-512.

concern, and that engagement in a group results in the growth of knowledge, and a sense of support and empowerment. Alternatively, those feeling efficacious may have the means at their disposal to tolerate greater anxiety. More recent work by Boenkhe and others on German adolescents has confirmed the negative association between political anxiety and poor mental health. They have also shown that older children are better able to distinquish between political and personal anxieties. Political anxieties are positively related to active coping methods, such as active communication and political engagement, which in themselves may increase the amount of political anxiety. However, defensive coping methods are positively associated with both personal anxiety and psychiatric symptoms.[70] The implications of this work are that the mechanism of repression has another significance in the understanding of activism than that postulated by Lasswell. Firstly, it is those individuals who are least sensitive to political threats who have the greatest risk of psychopathology. Secondly, activists appear to have chosen the most psychically healthy coping mechanism. I shall come back to these issues in Chapter 8.

The literature dealing specifically with activists is primarily concerned with eliciting the cognitive and emotional profiles that distinguish activists from others. Two excellent reviews sum up the most consistently reported

---

[70] Klaus Boehnke and others, "How West German Adolescents Experience the Nuclear Threat", *Political Psychology* 10, 3 (1989), pp. 419-443.

findings: activists are more preoccupied with the nuclear issue, have "higher levels of worry and anxiety", a "heightened sense of efficacy with regard to reducing the nuclear threat", and "believe that nuclear war is preventable but not survivable". They also believe that they have social support for their actions.[71] Nuclear efficacy is associated with strong feelings of political efficacy in general[72] and antinuclear activists are more likely to have been active on other political issues.[73] In addition, they believe that events in life can be personally controlled rather than that they are subject to external forces. Tyler and Mcgraw also found that a feeling of moral responsibility to prevent war was strongly and independently associated with activism.[74]

Yet the same criticism can be made of this approach as that based on personality traits. It is descriptive and correlational and, although most authors are careful to disclaim any attempt to establish causal relationships, the literature is scattered with deceptive terms such as "antecedents", "determinants" and "predictors", all of which

---

[71] Schatz and Fiske, "International Reactions", pp. 19--20.

[72] Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Psychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987), pp. 207--217.

[73] P. Milburn and M. Watanabe, "Activism Against Armageddon: Some Predictors of Nuclear-Related Behaviour", *Political Psychology* 9, 3 (1988), pp. 459--470.

[74] Tom R. Tyler and Kathleen M. Mcgraw, "The Threat of Nuclear War: Risk Interpretation and Behavioural Response", *Journal of Social Issues* 39, 1 (1983), pp. 25-40.

imply that the possession of these beliefs and feelings is likely to incline people towards activism. Thus, for example, a study by Fiske asked a random sample of telephone subscribers questions to determine the concreteness of their images of nuclear war, and questions about their degree of engagement in anti-nuclear activity.[75] The results showed that activism was significantly related to the concreteness of peoples images about nuclear war. She then claimed that "concrete images may catalyse action" but did not examine the reverse possibility that activism increases peoples concrete images.

Tyler and Mcgraw's study shows that anti-nuclear activism can be clearly distinguished from another active response to the nuclear threat: that of survivalists, who train and prepare to survive the aftermath of a nuclear war, and who see nuclear war as survivable but not preventable. Survivalists have less feeling of efficacy, less sense of internal control or moral responsibility for prevention of nuclear war. However, the study drew its sample from already established anti-nuclear and survivalist groups and, while it highlighted interesting differences, again it is impossible to judge the extent to which current forms of engagement determined these beliefs.

There have been some attempts to overcome this problem experimentally by, for example, manipulating the salience of an issue and then measuring its impact on behavioural intention and actual action, in this case petition signing.

---

[75] Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War".

It was found that increased salience did increase both intentions and action, and that gender, pro-disarmament attitudes and nuclear efficacy were strong predictors of the action. However while the experiment showed that increasing salience increased the tendency to perform a single action, it could not demonstrate a causal relationship with activism in general.[76]

The main problem appears to be that, while there was much speculation, little empirical work was done to investigate the actual sources of the feelings and beliefs under study. There was research on the impact of the film *The Day After*. This was a TV film depicting the effects of a nuclear war on a small American town. In keeping with already established work on the low impact of the media on people's beliefs, the research showed that the film neither shifted beliefs on the issue nor galvanised people into action: rather, it confirmed existing tendencies.[77] Other research regarding parental socialisation, by Hamilton and others, showed that, firstly, the issue of nuclear war was rarely discussed in families [78] and, secondly, while

---

[76] D. L. Fox and J. Schofield, "Issue Salience, Perceived Efficacy, and Perceived Risk: An Experimental Study of the Origins of Anti-Nuclear War Activity", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 19 (1989), pp. 805--827.

[77] Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War", p. 211.

[78] S. B. Hamilton, T. A. Knox, and W. G. Keilin, "The Nuclear Family: Correspondence in Cognitive and Affective Reactions to the Threat of Nuclear War Amongst Older Adolescents and Their Parents", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 15 (1986), pp. 133--145, cited by Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Psychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987).

students perceived themselves as having the same beliefs as their parents, very often the beliefs did not actually coincide.[79] However, to my knowledge, no biographical or longitudinal work has been done into how the feelings and beliefs associated with anti-nuclear activism arose and developed over time. Once again process is left out of the picture.

It is possible, on the basis of this overview, to make some very general points: that movements cannot be understood simply in terms of the structural conditions from which they emerge, or in terms of the resources available; that individuals engaged in democratic collective action are neither marginal nor deviant; and that the saliency of an issue and feelings of personal and political efficacy are significantly associated with political engagement. That one cannot say more on the basis of more than half a century of research raises the question of whether it is wrong to try and obtain a global picture. It is certainly not profitable to pursue a reductionist approach that searches for a causal relationship between engagement and one set of social or psychological parameters. My own view is that the above demonstrates a clear need, firstly, to acknowledge and then investigate the complexity, diversity and specificity of social movements; secondly, to acknowledge that their

---

[79] S. B. Hamilton, T. A. Knox , W. G. Keilin, and E. L. Chavez, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Accounting for Variability in Cognitive/Effective Responses to the Threat of Nuclear War, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 17 (1987), pp. 927--952, cited by Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Psychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987).

emergence is a dynamic and interactive process; which means that, thirdly, there is a value in examining the specific process of individual engagement in a specific form of collective action. This is the aim of my own research.

The Synthetic Approach

There are two significant studies that, from slightly differing perspectives, have taken what I would call a synthetic and dynamic approach and have tried to resolve some of the problems raised above.

Melucci is responsible for introducing the concept of "New Social Movements". He identified the way that political reductionism in particular, with its focus on public data sources and collectable and analysable facts and events, ignores the multidimensional, composite and plural character of collective action, much of which occurs outside the public domain. Melucci introduced the formulation of New Social Movements to embrace this plurality. In doing so he stresses that he is not describing a break with the past but is trying to identify those novel characteristics of movements, such as the ethno-national mobilisations, womens, peace, and environmental movements, that defy both description and explanation by the traditional approaches.[80]

Melucci identifies a number of key features. Firstly, the movements are both prepolitical - using informal

---

[80] A. Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*.

networks and reticular and segmented organisational forms - and metapolitical in that they "publicise the existence of basic dilemmas that cannot be resolved by means of political decisions. For example: we cannot eliminate our knowledge about nuclear energy, and the problems it poses can never be completely resolved by the political acts of negotiation and administrative control."[81]

Secondly, the movements are more concerned with information and struggles over symbolic resources than with the production and distribution of material goods and resources. Thirdly, "parts of the movements invest much time and energy in constructing forms of organisation which are not considered instrumental for the achievement of social and political goals, but viewed primarily as a way of experiencing collective action in itself." That is, means become an end in themselves. This is particularly evident in the lifestyle concerns and non-violent actions of the peace movement. "Participants . . . act in the present tense. They are not driven by grandiose visions of the future; their organisations are not vehicles for the implementation of such visions. Rather those who participate . . . view their participation as an end in itself." Fourthly, they "integrate latent and visible dimensions of collective action . . . there is a complementarity between private life . . . and publicly expressed commitment. . . . One does not live to be a militant. Instead one lives and that is why from time to

---

[81] Ibid., pp. 222--223.

time one can be a militant." Finally, there is a "planetary consciousness", a new awareness of "the global dimensions of complex societies."[82] He makes other important points: that a great deal of movement activity goes on in the invisible and submerged networks of everyday life, and that the public mass mobilisations are only one aspect of movement life. And that involvement in collective action is disruptive, disorienting, temporary and highly fragile.

I list them in some detail not because I wish to engage in the debate over whether New Social Movements are new or not, but because all of these features are evident in the movements in my own study. In fact, what Melucci is describing is the emergence of what I would call a "politics of connection". I define this in greater detail when I examine my own groups in Chapter 5. This helps to explain why traditional explanations of mobilisation are insufficient. Interestingly, Melucci identifies these features as "novel structural characteristics". One could as easily identify them as new manifestations of individual belief and behaviour, which again defy the traditional sociopsychological explanations provided above.

Melucci is both a sociologist and an analytically trained psychologist, so this synthesis is perhaps not surprising; nor is the fact that he challenges "the dualistic thinking" that "emphasises either the objective or subjective dimensions of social life".[83] An approach to

---

[82] Ibid., pp. 204--206.

[83] Ibid., p. 197.

collective action based on the

> common structural conditions of collective actors assumes their capacity to perceive, evaluate, and decide what they have in common. It ignores, in other words, the very processes that enable or inhibit actors to define circumstances of common action. Individual differences and motivations, however, cannot explain how certain individuals come to recognise themselves in a more or less shared sense of 'we'.[84]

Meanwhile the pathological approach ignores the

> constructive and creative dimensions of collective action. . . . People do not act in a void. They are always emeshed in relations with other actors and through this interaction they produce meanings, express their needs and activate their relationships. Collective action is never a purely irrational phenomenon. It is always to a degree socially constructed and meaningful to its participants.[85]

Melucci's main point is that both collective actors and their opponents overemphasise the "unity" of the action. The actors emphasise the "highest meaning", claiming a unity they rarely achieve, while the opponents stress the lowest, dismissing it all as pathological. In fact "whatever unity does exist should be considered as the result, not the starting point, a fact to be explained rather than assumed."[86] This assumption of unity prevents one addressing three crucial questions: through which processes do actors construct collective action? How is the unity of the various elements produced? And through which processes

---

[84] Ibid., p. 20.

[85] Ibid., p. 191.

[86] Ibid., p. 26.

and relationships do individuals become involved in and defect from collective action?

Melucci was concerned with process. However, I would argue that it is the process of group maintenance rather than formation which is his object of study. Melucci starts with already established groups from the youth and women's movements in the Milan area, and, throughout his research, is concerned with group behaviour. What was being observed was the renegotiation and discussion of relationships and meanings among those already in relationship. What was not examined was how individuals came to be there. The third question in the triad - how do individuals get engaged? - remains unanswered.

Melucci's work incorporates insights and methodologies from social psychology, but he is primarily interested in the collective. Andrews, by contrast in *Lifetimes of Commitment*, has focussed on the development of individual political commitment.[87] Andrews interviewed in depth fifteen British socialists between the ages of seventy and ninety and used these life histories to explore the nature of sustained political commitment in those working for social change. Her study is a major challenge to the received wisdom on the relationship between ageing and activism, which is that commitment to political causes declines with time. The study also challenges some of the established theories of lifespan development, namely,that old age is a period of withdrawal and disengagement from

---

[87] Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment*.

worldly concerns. The significance of her research to my own work is that, having made a similar critique to my own of the ahistoric and apolitical quality of much psychological research into political activism, she argues that both the emergence of commitment and its sustainability over a lifetime can only be understood by paying attention to both the individual and the historical context. Her choice of a qualitative methodology is an attempt to do this.

Andrews bridges the gap between the social and the psychological by using social identity theory, drawing on Tajfel's definitions of "social categorisation" as "the ordering of the social environment in terms of groupings of persons in a manner which makes sense to the individual. It helps to structure the causal understanding of the social environment and thus it helps as a guide for action."[88] She also draws on his definition of social identity as "that part of an individual's self concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." Andrews extends the concept, emphasising the importance of differentiating between voluntary - such as political groups - and involuntary group membership - such as gender or race - and the fact that

---

[88] Henri Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour and Intergroup Behaviour", in *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. H. Tajfel (London: Academic Press, 1978), cited by Molly Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment: Aging, Politics, Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 26.

group memberships through a lifetime are multiple, shifting and complex, and that people cannot be reduced to single categories or even series of categories.

The main thrust of Andrews's work is to show how political, in this case socialist, consciousness emerges from a growing sense of identity within a group, in this case a class; and that subsequent understanding and analysis of the role of that group - as oppressed working class or oppressive middle class - results in the desire to act and change the structure that produces oppression and exploitation.

For her activists the process of radicalisation, that is the "transformation of lived experience" into "political consciousness", depended on three influences: "identifiable individuals"; "intellectual stimulants"; and "the role of highly visible organisations".[89] Her respondents were impressionable young adults during what she describes as "the political turmoil" of the interwar years. Thus these influences took a particular form: radical street speakers, the Left Book Club, the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the National Unemployed Workers Movement, for example. It is this intersection of their direct or indirect personal experiences - of unemployment and poverty - and of the historical context of events such as the miners' strike, the hunger marches and the Spanish Civil war, with an easily available analysis of that context, that she sees as crucial in catalysing commitment.

---

[89] Andrews, *Lifetimes*, p. 63.

Andrews distinguishes working class from middle class activists, seeing direct experience as playing a more central role in radicalising the former, while, for middle class activists "radicalisation meant applying intellectual, abstract concepts to situations which did not directly impinge upon their own circumstances."[90] Class awareness itself was a less significant catalyst for this group. International concerns and previous religious commitment played a larger role.

Although Andrews's main interest is with the nature of political commitment and how it is sustained, the significance of her work for my own is that she does examine the initial process of engagement. In addition, she has focussed on a particular type of activist over a particular period and makes no claim for the generalisability of her findings. What her work does is challenge both the psychopathological and the purely structural explanations of activism by examining the diverse responses of a group of individuals to the real historical and political problems of their generation. Moreover, although her work is guided by social identity theory, she tacitly acknowledges the importance of aspects of a lifecycle approach. Erikson's idea - that it is the juxtaposition of critical periods in lifespan development with key historical moments which is significant - is born out by the fact that the political orientation chosen by Andrews's respondents during the tumultuous events of young adulthood endures for a lifetime.

---

[90] Ibid., p. 132.

However, there is a troubling undertone to the book that seems to suggest that the only worthwhile form of activist commitment is radicalisation through the awakening of "socialist conciousness". All of these terms are elided and at no point is the term "socialism" clearly defined. Rather, Andrews moves between her own, often didactic, statements about the responsibilities of socialists - for example: "a middle class socialist need not deny or feel guilty about her class background. She should, rather, acknowledge, accept, and even use it to further the cause she believes in"[91] - and the varied and conflictive statements about what socialism means to her respondents. This highlights the complexity and diversity underlying even those beliefs that share a common label, and emphasises the need for even greater in-depth understanding of the individual.

My own study draws on both the methodology and many of the insights gained from Andrews work. I will return to some of them - the role of triggering events, the nature of responsibility, the role of empathy, and perceptions of a connected self - in later chapters, and compare her findings with my own. I also hope that my quite different and more time-limited focus - on engagement with the concrete issues of peace and human rights in the context of specific collective actions, and on a particular method of action (non-violence), rather than on a broadly defined ideology over an entire lifetime - has allowed a more detailed

---

[91] Ibid., p. 134.

exploration of some of those aspects of individual psychology ignored by Andrews's study.

Part 2: Choosing Non-violence

At the outset I stated that my concern was with the process of engagement in non-violent collective action. This focus is important because methods of action, particularly the choice between violent and non-violent methods, have received very little examination of any kind in attempts to understand activism. As illustrated above, generalisations about activists using violence are assumed to apply to non-violence as well.[92] Alternatively, single acts like petition signing are used to indicate activist tendencies as a whole. Yet the decision whether to act encompasses at its heart the decision on how to act: the attractiveness and availability of different methods can have a determining effect on whether action takes place at all. For instance, the rapid transformations that occurred in Eastern Europe in 1989 demonstrated the power that televised examples of effective non-violent action, transmitted from one country to another, had in mobilising millions. Thus, any attempt to understand the process of engagement needs to examine the method of acting and how the choice to act in a particular way came to be made.

It is through focussing on method that one becomes aware of the degree to which choosing to act is a moral as well as a political choice. Melucci points out that New Social Movements are often characterised by having methods

---

[92] See W. Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960); and Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

that are goals in themselves and thus reflect and express the values of the group. So an examination of method perforce necessitates an examination of values, of the moral orientation of the actor, and of how this orientation emerges. I should make clear that I am using "moral" in the same way as the philosopher Midgeley. Midgely defines moral choice not simply as the "good" choice but as the overall system of values that guides us when we prioritise.[93]

> Provided we are talking practically - talking about what people choose to do, think and be, not just about what happens to them - any choice of central purpose is a moral choice because it involves what anyone will call moral thinking. . . . The moral point of view is the one where we consider priorities, where we ask "what are the most serious, the central things in life?"

This process of prioritising is also a way of expressing how activists perceive themselves. Andrews states that "it is through the process of prioritising commitments that individuals make essential statements to themselves and to the social world of whom they perceive themselves to be."[94] She argues that, for her respondents, choosing to act on a radical analysis of lived experience - that is, both defining oneself as a socialist and then following this with appropriate action, such as organising, fighting in Spain or working against poverty - is a form of prioritising that results in activism becoming "the most fundamental and

---

[93] Mary Midgeley, *Heart and Mind: The Varieties of Moral Experience* (New York: St Martins Press, 1991), p. 126.

[94] Andrews, *Lifetimes of Commitment*, p. 147.

enduring aspect of respondents' self definition". It follows that the particular choice of non-violence is likely to be connected to both the activist's moral orientation and to her sense of self; and that any attempt to understand the process of engagement needs to explore these relationships.

There is little exploration of these particular relationships in the literature. However there are specific areas of literature that provide some pertinent information. These are:

1) **Political science literature,** which looks at non-violence as a method.

2) **Feminist studies,** which looks at the relationship between gender and the choice of non-violence.

3)Studies of **the relationship between moral judgement and activism.**

4) Studies on **the relationship between moral orientation and sense of self,** which hint at but do not explore the relationship with political non-violence.

5) The literature on **empathy.** This is important for three reasons: because of the negative correlation between empathy and aggression; because the development of empathy appears to be fostered by similar socialisation processes to those that foster student activism; and because of the suggested correlation between empathy and pro-social behaviour, which for some writers includes non-violence.

6) **Autobiographical and biographical studies of non-violent activists,** These may show whether or not the activists' experience provides evidence for any of the

points made above.

1. Political Science Literature

The main political theorist in the field, Gene Sharp, has - using numerous historical examples - produced an encyclopaedic documentation of the methods and dynamics of non-violent collective action.[95] Sharp does not examine individual motivations for action, but, on the basis of his historical research, he does identify the qualities he believes individuals should have in order to act effectively. These are: the ability to deal with fear; self esteem, that is, a belief in one's own capacity to act; and resilience and autonomy, particularly in the initiators of actions. He suggests that engagement in non-violent collective action not only requires such qualities, it can produce them, as well as decreasing submissiveness and aggression, and increasing creativity, responsibility and group cooperation. The effects of such changes are also felt outside the context of the action.

The other theme running through all of Sharp's work is that non-violence is a practical technique that can be, and usually has been, adopted by those with no particular philosophical interest in it but who regard it as the most appropriate tactic at the time. Yet participants may also

---

[95] Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Extending Horizon Books, 1973).

find that, while the method may have been adopted for tactical reasons in a crisis, with use they shift from a pragmatic approach to non-violence to a growing commitment to the philosophy.

Sharp believes that, to be fully effective, the choice of political non-violence necessarily entails collective action. This is because he sees its effectiveness as depending on an analysis of power similar to Arendt's. She defines power as "the human ability . . . to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together." Whereas violence "is distinguished by its instrumental character." Thus "the extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All. And this latter is never possible without instruments."[96] One of the implications of this view is that for non-violence to have its maximum effect it needs to be a collective act. This illustrates how important understanding the choice of method can be to understanding process: the individual committed to political non-violence is likely to look for or initiate a collective in which to act.

Solomon and Fishman analysed the choice of non-violence in student civil rights activists and showed how, in one group, there were multiple motivations, ranging from those who had made a pragmatic choice, to others for whom it was

---

[96] Hannah Arendt, *Crises of The Republic* (London: Harvest/HBJ, 1969), pp. 141--145.

rooted in religious and moral values. They suggested that non-violence was a development of a tradition of passive aggression in American Blacks, which had been the only possible form of resistance to oppression in the past. Given the dangers of retaliation, non-violent action was a way of transforming aggression while minimising retaliation. They also found that using non-violence appears to increase self esteem and sometimes to produce feelings of moral superiority.[97] The important points that can be drawn from Solomon and Fishman are that, while motivations for non-violence may be multiple, there is a dynamic and transformative relationship between the use of non-violence and sense of self.

2. Feminist Studies

In both the personal and public writings of women one can distinguish two overlapping approaches to two overlapping questions: why do women appear to be more non-violent than men? And why do they often choose non-violence for collective political action? One is the "separate spheres" approach, which argues that women's non-violence is rooted in biology. The suggestion is that the act of giving birth in itself predisposes women to adopt a nurturing and caring concern for the world. Many feminists find such a position

---

[97] Frederic Solomon and Jacob R. Fishman, "The Psychosocial Meaning of Nonviolence in Student Civil Rights Activities", *Psychiatry* 25 (1964), pp. 227--236.

problematic. For one thing it is only too easy to point to women involved in armed struggles, and in control of armies, all over the world. Secondly, this approach appears to reinforce women's subjugated position in a gender hierarchy, where roles are clearly divided.

A modern restatement of these ideas comes from the philosopher Ruddick in her book *Maternal Thinking*. She argues that it is specifically the practise of mothering, which can be undertaken by either sex, that is related to non-violence. She argues that maternal practise should be distinguished from other kinds of care activities, in that it entails a response to the specific demands from a child for "preservation, growth and social acceptability".[98] This generates a particular kind of thinking that "contrasts as a whole with military thinking" while political non-violence is a "natural extension" of maternal practise.[99] Thus "to get their way mothers engage in non-violent techniques that are familiar from more public struggles: prayer, persuasion, appeasement, self-suffering, negotiation, bribery." Non-violence is adopted from a position of weakness, because of women's social powerlessness, and from a position of strength and restraint, because they have enormous power to damage their children if they wish.[100]

---

[98] Sarah Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1989), p. 17.

[99] Ibid., p. 150.

[100] Ibid., p. 157.

> The four ideals of non-violence - renunciation, resistance, reconciliation, and peacekeeping - govern only some maternal practises of some mothers [but they also] describe, from a particular perspective, maternal practise itself. . . . They not only modify aggresion in the interests of connection but develop connections that limit aggression before it arises.[101]

She argues that these approaches have a political and public potential that is already visible in some political actions, such as the activities of the Mothers of the Disappeared in Latin America. She does not argue that mothers are intrinsically peaceful nor does she deny the existence of maternal violence. Nor does she suggest that maternal thinking is the only source of political non-violence. What she is identifying is a potential.

Another approach to gender and non-violence sees the choice of non-violence as arising from women's exclusion from public space as a result of the "patriarchal organisation" of society, that is, a society where social roles are defined by a gender hierarchy. It is because of their role as outsiders, rather than because of their biology, that women can see the damage done by militarism. This argument was most powerfully articulated by Virginia Woolf. She argues that the institutionalisation of the "sex gender system" bred in women submission and in men the belief that they had the right to dominate. The way out of this was not for women to enter the system but to refuse to be coopted and to invent different methods of action - such

---

[101] Ibid., pp. 176, 182.

as non-violence.[102]

Contemporary women and feminists draw on both these strands of thinking, and sometimes a combination of both, when explaining why they have engaged in non-violence. For example, Tamara Swade, explaining how she created a peace group for mothers, says her concern about nuclear weapons grew out of the birth of her child, its vulnerability and her own responsibility for its survival and "the same feeling now extends to all children."[103] In contrast, a British feminist anti-nuclear group called WONT [Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat] called for women's "resistance to our assigned role" and the need for a "different consciousness." This is possible because "women have less vested interests in the present system, and are more easily able to critiscise it."[104] It will be seen that some of the women in my study also draw on variations and combinations of these two positions to help explain their non-violence.

---

[102] Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: Penguin, 1977).

[103] Tamara Swade, "Babies Against The Bomb", in *Keeping the Peace,* ed. Lynne Jones (London: The Womens Press, 1983), p. 65.

[104] Nottingham WONT, "Working as a Group: Nottingham Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat", in *Keeping the Peace*, ed. Lynne Jones (London: The Women's Press, 1983), p. 28.

3. The Relationship Between Moral Judgement and Activism

Much of the work that has looked at the connection between activism and moral orientation was done within the framework of Kohlberg's theory on the development of moral judgement. This theory is worth reviewing here because, firstly, it provides one explanation of how different patterns of socialisation in childhood can contribute to the emergence of activism. Secondly, it provides evidence for Kohlberg's and others' theories of how action arises from moral judgement. These theories posit a cognitive model and I shall explore its validity for my own data in Chapter 7.

Through longitudinal study Kohlberg examined the responses of children, as they grew into adults, to hypothetical moral dilemmas. On the basis of their responses he postulated that moral judgement develops in stages as the child develops cognitively. At stage one "the physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences." At stage two, right action is what "instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others". These, with their emphasis on punishment and reward, are regarded as pre-conventional stages. Conventional reasoning emphasises conformity and the active maintenance of social norms. Thus, at stage three, the main concern is to be perceived as doing good or well according to stereotypical norms of behaviour. Stage four reasoners have a greater concern with law and order and

fixed rules. Post-conventional reasoners exemplify moral maturity. Individuals at stages five and six - which Kohlberg later condensed - use autonomous and principled reasoning. That is, they are now aware of abstract principles independent of their own needs and conventions. So "right is defined in accord with self chosen ethical principles." These are universal principles of justice, reciprocity, equality, and respect for the dignity and rights of all human beings.[105] Moral development is therefore seen as progress towards a greater capacity for abstraction, less self-interest and concern with conformity, and an increasing capacity to take the role of the other. Kohlberg argues that this pattern of development is an invariant universal sequence, although adults may "stabilise" at earlier stages than five. For example "stage three personal concordance morality is a functional morality for housewives and mothers; it is not for businessmen and professionals."[106]

One of the most significant attempts to relate moral judgement to political activism is Haan, Smith and Block's study of college students and Peace Corps volunteers in California at the time of the Berkeley Free Speech (FSM) movement.[107] In particular they looked at the extent to

---

[105] L. Kohlberg and R. Kramer, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Childhood and Adult Moral Development", *Human Development* 12 (1969), pp. 93--120.

[106] Ibid., p. 108.

[107] Norma Haan, M. Brewster Smith, and Jeanne H. Block, "Moral Reasoning of Young Adults: Political-Social Behaviour, Family Backgrounds, and Personality Correlates",

which individuals actively engaged in a well publicised "sit in". They found that principled moral reasoners, as contrasted with the conventionally moral, were more active in political-social matters, particularly in protest; their views on current issues were more discrepant from their parents', who were themselves politically liberal; their self- and ideal conceptualizations emphasised interpersonal reactivity and obligation, self-expressiveness and a willingness to live in opposition.

By contrast, conventional reasoners were less active, valued ambition and competition as opposed to interpersonal responsiveness, and had more harmonious relationships with parents, who favoured a rule based non-permissive upbringing. Stage two reasoners were strong supporters of radical ideology. Men were more likely to be active but, in contrast to principled reasoners, saw self-enhancement as more important than reciprocal obligation.

The study shows a strong relationship between the way conflict is handled in the family and moral stage, which suggests that moderate open conflict during upbringing is one of the factors enhancing moral development and thus the likelihood of activism. It also shows that "a variety of moral reasons can lead to the same behaviour".[108] Some conventional reasoners did join the "sit in", arguing that the authorities had failed to function as good authorities,

---

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 10 (1968), pp. 183--201.

[108] Ibid., p. 198.

while principled reaoners acted out of a concern for civil rights.

The significance of this study for my own work is that it suggests that it is at least in part through the impact on moral judgement that upbringing and personality contributes to activism. Thus it helps to explain the relationship between family conflict, family values and activism posited by the socialisation literature reviewed above.

A number of other studies reviewed by Haste appear to bear out the finding that "post conventional reasoners are more engaged in action in general", and that most stage four reasoners reject direct action. However, she points out the wide definition of activism.[109] And while many distinguish between community action and political action, which is for the most part non-violent, such correlational studies cannot fully explore the nature of the connection between moral judgement and action, the way the choice of action was made, or the interaction between engagement and values. That such an interaction exists is shown by Haan's finding from the FSM studies that, for a majority, active engagement in civil disobedience produces a different stage of moral reasoning than that elicited by a hypothetical dilemma. For post-conventional reasoners this different stage is higher, suggesting that participation in real life moral action

---

[109] Helen Weinreich-Haste, "Kohlberg's Contribution to Political Psychology: A Positive View", in *Lawrence Kohlberg, Consensus and Controversy,* ed. S. Mogdil and C. Mogdil (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1986), p. 343.

encourages moral development.[110]

Kohlberg suggests that the mediating factor between moral judgement and action is responsibility defined as "a concern for and acceptance of, the consequences of one's actions", and as a desire for "consistency between what one says one should or would do and what one actually does."[111] Put simply, moral judgement necessitates a cognitive process in which a problem is first defined, then a judgement is made as to what is the right action, followed by a judgement of the degree to which one is personally responsible for acting in a manner consistent with the choice made. Drawing on experimental evidence from his own and others' work, Kohlberg argues that the sense of personal responsibility increases with each moral stage and it is this that accounts for the increasing activism of higher stage activists. He also shows how this model can be used to interpret real life action: for example Michael Bernhardt, the single soldier to refuse to shoot in the My Lai massacre, was at the highest moral stage. He decided that, in contrast to his "lower stage" buddies, he had personal responsibility for his actions and that this could not be handed over to others, stating "the first step to actually doing right" is to see "that something is right. . . . If I think about it long

---

[110] Norma Haan, "Hypothetical and Actual Moral Reasoning in a Situation of Civil Disobedience", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (1975), pp. 255--270.

[111] Lawrence Kohlberg and Daniel Candee, "The Relationship of Moral Judgement to Moral Action", in *Morality, Moral Behaviour and Moral Development,* ed. W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gerwitz (New York: Wiley, 1984), p. 519.

enough I am just positively compelled."[112] The My Lai situation also demonstrates the way that responsibility judgements are themselves affected by situational features such as group norms, or the number of people present. Kohlberg's point is that the higher the stage the greater the capacity for autonomous decision-making and the less tendency there is to diffuse responsibility to others.

Blasi's understanding of the relationship between moral judgement and action is a variant of this model. He accepts the role of responsibility in mediating judgement and action, but he sees action arising from a desire to be consistent not only with a particular judgement but more fundamentally with oneself as a moral being.

> Moral identity is connected to action through responsibility and integrity. . . . Moral action is an extension of the self into the realm of the possible, of what is not but needs to be, if the agent is to remain true to himself or herself. Responsibility in this sense stresses the self as a source of 'moral compulsion'. Integrity emphasises the idea of moral self-consistency, intactness and wholeness.[113]

What he is saying is that one acts in order to maintain a consistent sense of oneself as a person. Action, thus, partly depends on the degree to which we are disturbed by inconsistency. He suggest that those with defensive

---

[112] Ibid., p. 571.

[113] Augusto Blasi, "Moral identity: Its Role in Moral Functioning", in *Morality, Moral Behaviour and Moral Development,* ed. W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gerwitz (New York: Wiley, 1984), p. 132.

pyschological styles that tend to avoid and suppress conflict will be less disturbed and therefore less activated by inconsistency than those with a more open, organised, coping response. He emphasises that moral identity is constructed through moral reasoning, which leads to the construction and internalisation of a moral self, rather than the other way round. There is support for this theory in Colby and Damon's study of moral exemplars, that is, individuals who have acted with extraordinary moral courage and commitment in their lives. The authors found that what appeared to distinguish these individuals from others was the degree to which they personally identified with their moral beliefs. There was a "uniting of self and morality". They defined themselves in terms of their moral goals and thus felt a greater sense of responsibility to act when a moral judgement was made.[114]

The main characteristic of these models is that action results primarily from how one **thinks** about a situation. Kohlberg allows for ego variables such as IQ and attention span to modulate one's perceptions of responsibility, and Haan suggest that non-cognitive variables, such as the degree to which one is group affiliative, may distinguish between active and inactive post conventional reasoners. Yet, while Blasi's concept of self consistency is to some degree dependent on one's affective state, by and large the emotions are not given a very significant role in

---

[114] Anne Colby and William Damon, *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

instigating action. Yet Andrews's activists, who bear out the importance of self consistency, see their responsiveness as arising from both feeling and intellect, and much of the literature seems to suggest that the primary response to an event calling for action is emotional. I shall deal at greater length with the role of affect in arousing action in Chapter 7.

A more fundamental problem lies with the acceptance of Kohlberg's model of the development of moral reasoning. Firstly, the assumption that individuals universally progress towards a clearer conceptualisation of the inherent moral worth of liberal democratic values has been widely challenged.[115] In particular, the assumption that individual liberties are of superior moral worth to the needs of the group is by no means universal. Secondly, even within Western culture the ideological bias of the stages is such that, repeatedly, more conservative thinkers produce stage four thinking and liberal leftists produce stage five.[116] This could mean that liberals are necessarily more morally mature than conservatives or, as other evidence suggests, that liberals endorse the beliefs they perceive as the closest match to their morality. But there is the possibility that it is political ideology, rather than moral stage, that is being measured.

---

[115] Weinreich-Haste, "Kohlberg's Contribution", pp. 339--340.

[116] Ibid., p. 344.

4. Studies of the Relationship Between Moral Orientation and Sense of Self

One of the most important challenges to Kohlberg's perspective comes from Gilligan and her colleagues. This body of work is particularly significant for my own because it shows that there is more than one moral orientation, that different moral orientations appear to be related to different perceptions of the self and different understandings of responsibility. The political implications - the fact that the decision to engage in non-violent action might arise from, or help to create, a specific moral orientation and sense of self - are not explored. It is this relationship that I explore in Chapter 9. In order to do this it is important to have a clear understanding of how the different moral orientations might arise. I will also explore how other writers discuss different perceptions of the self, and the suggestions by some that these emerge in response to specific social and political forces.

Gilligan noticed that Kohlberg's model of moral development was initially drawn from an all-male sample, and that women's moral development appeared, to many writers, to be both anomalous and deficient. Consequently she re-examined women's responses to Kohlberg's hypothetical dilemmas and to the real life moral conflict faced by women deciding whether or not to have an abortion. What she discovered was that women construct and attempt to resolve

moral problems from a quite different standpoint, one in which mature moral judgement emphasises the "moral problem arising from conflicting responsibilities rather than competing rights" and which depends on "contextual and narrative" rather than "formal and abstract thinking".[117] Moral development is, thus, seen not as a growing understanding of rights and rules but rather as "the emergence of an increasingly complex understanding of the relationship between self and other"; proceeding from an initial concern with survival of the self to a focus on goodness towards others; and finally to a "reflective understanding of care as the most adequate guide to the resolution of conflicts in human relationships."[118]

Work by Gilligan and her colleagues over the last ten years has confirmed that there are at least two moral orientations: **a justice perspective**, which focuses on the problems of inequality and oppression, and stresses the importance of reciprocity and equal respect; and **a care perspective**, which emphasises the problems of broken relationships, and values attention and response to need.[119] She emphasises that both perspectives constitute mature moral thinking. However, there is a tension between them,

---

[117] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 19.

[118] Ibid., p. 114.

[119] Carol Gilligan and Jane Attanucci, "Two Moral Orientations", in *Mapping the Moral Domain*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

exemplified by the fact that detachment, a mark of maturity from the justice perspective, is *the* moral problem from the care perspective, exemplifying the failure to attend to need. Conversely, attention to need and context, which signifies maturity in the care perspective, is *the* moral problem in the justice perpective, preventing one from treating all as equal.

Research on individual responses to real life moral dilemmas has shown that both men and women can use both orientations, but that there is a tendency to focus on one to the exclusion of the other. It has confirmed that there is some association with gender and that men are more likely to use a justice focus and women a care focus.[120] Johnston, examining the responses of children to the moral dilemmas posed by Aesop's fables, found that children were able to switch orientations. She showed that while most of the children understood the logic of both orientations, girls more often spontaneously adopted a care focus and preferred it, while boys both offered and preferred a justice focus. She also discovered that different types of dilemma tended to "pull" for different orientations. For example, heightened inequality in the story produced more justice solutions. However, there was also a "tendency for girls to see attachment where boys saw inequality and for girls to present care solutions as feasible where boys described them

---

[120] Ibid., p. 82

as naive and unworkable."[121]

If individuals have a tendency to adopt different moral orientations, how do these different perspectives emerge? Gilligan and Wiggins argue that they are rooted in the early childhood experiences of relationship. I cannot improve on their own succinct summary of her theory and will quote it in full:

> The different dynamics of early childhood inequality and attachment lay the groundwork for two moral visions - one of justice and one of care. The child's experience of inequality and of attachment, sometimes but not always convergent, grounds a distinction between the dimensions of inequality/equality and attachment/detatchment which characterise all forms of human relationships. Although the nature of the attachment between child and parent varies across individual and cultural settings, and although inequality can be heightened or muted by familial and societal relationships, all people are born into a situation of inequality and no child survives in the absence of adult connection. Since everyone is vulnerable to both oppression and abandonment, two stories about morality recur in human experience.[122]

Children, when they demand fairness in the face of unequal power and test the strength of care by demanding love, "discover the efficacy of moral standards, the extent

---

[121] K. Johnston, "Two Moral Orientations, Two Problem-Solving Strategies: Adolescents' Solutions to Dilemmas in Fables", (Ed. D. Dissertation, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1985), cited by Carol Gilligan and Grant Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships", in *The Emergence of Morality in Early Childhood*, ed. Jerome Kagan and Sharon Lamb (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 277-305.

[122] Gilligan and Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships", in *The Emergence of Morality in Early Childhood*, ed. Jerome Kagan and Sharon Lamb (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 281

to which justice offers protection to the unequal in the face of oppression and the extent to which care protects attachment against threats of abandonment or detachment."

Thus "two moral injunctions - not to treat others unfairly and not to turn away from someone in need - define two lines of moral development." Observations of sex differences in moral understanding and behaviour reflect a tendency for these problems to be salient to different degrees or differently organised in male and female development. "This is not to imply that one understanding is superior to the other or that moral behaviour is biologically determined." Rather, that "to the extent that biological sex, the psychology of gender, and the cultural norms and values that define masculine and feminine behaviour affect the experience of equality and attachment, these factors presumably will influence moral development."[123] She draws on Chodorow's work on the development of the female ego which suggests that because girls are primarily parented by a same sex parent, and experience themselves as like their mothers, the experience of attachment becomes fused with the process of identity formation. While, for boys, self definition depends on separation from the primary caretaker.[124] Thus Gilligan suggests that attachment may mediate the experience of

---

[123] Gilligan and Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships.

[124] Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 150, 166--167.

childhood inequality to a far greater degree for girls than for boys. Therefore, it is not surprising that girls gain their own sense of efficacy and self esteem from their capacity to form connections with others and maintain relationships; whereas, for boys, it is the experience of inequality with more powerful fathers, with whom they identify, that is most salient, and self esteem comes through the growth of equality and autonomy. These differential strands of development are reinforced by a society that values male dominance and female nurturing, likewise frowning on dependence in men and strivings for equality in women.[125]

To summarise: Gilligan is suggesting that for those - primarily girls - for whom attachment is the most salient experience in childhood, self definition depends upon connection to others, and thus the primary moral concern is with care and the maintenance of relationship. When inequality is the more salient, self definition emphasises individual autonomy and separation from others, and the primary moral concern is with justice and reciprocity. It is this second strand of development that has received most attention from psychologists and which has been posited as the norm for all human development. Not surprisingly, girls have therefore been perceived as having problems with development. This is exemplified by Haan's work with Berkeley students described above, where her finding that

---

[125] Gilligan and Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality", p. 282.

women with post-conventional reasoning have more dysphoric self descriptions than men leads her to suggest that "the development of autonomous morality - perhaps even autonomous ego functioning - may be a more arduous task for girls than boys."[126] The study shows that women are quite able to use a justice-based morality if asked. It would, however, be interesting to know whether or not - had a care focus morality provided the framework of the study - the higher stage women would still have been dysphoric.

Gilligan's thesis that the separate moral orientations are rooted in differing perceptions of the self is confirmed by Lyons, who developed a clear system of coding individuals' self definitions and their responses to moral dilemmas. She defines a **connected self** as one where "the individual defines themselves [sic] as connected in relation to others, and sees them in their own situations and contexts." A **separate self** is one where "individuals define themselves as separate/objective in relation to others and see others as one would like to be seen by them." She points out that both of these self definitions perceive the self as related to the other. The difference is in the form of relationship. She found that "regardless of sex, individuals who characterised themselves in predominantly connected terms" more frequently used a morality of care, which she defines as "resting on an understanding of relationships as response to another in their terms", and

---

[126] Norma Haan, M. Brewster Smith, Jeanne H. Block, "Moral Reasoning of Young Adults: Political-Social Behaviour", p. 193.

where "moral problems are generally construed as issues of relationship or response", where the prime consideration is how to prevent harm, relieve suffering and maintain relationships. Context cannot be ignored. In contrast, individuals characterising themselves in separate/objective terms more frequently use a "morality of justice", defined as "fairness" resting "on an understanding of relationships as reciprocity between separate individuals, grounded in the duty and obligation of their roles". Moral problems are construed as "issues", such as conflicting claims; and the prime considerations are one's duty, and how to apply agreed rules and principles fairly. She also found that women more frequently "used characterisations of a connected self", while men more frequently used the separate/ objective mode. However, some men and women used both modes, and a small proportion did not perceive themselves in relational terms at all.[127]

Thus, different definitions of self would appear to give rise to different moral perspectives and also differing concepts of responsibility. In the justice focus responsibility is seen as obligation and commitment. In contrast, in the care focus "responsibility means acting responsively in relationships, and the self - as moral agent - takes the initiative to gain awareness and respond to a

---

[127] Nona Plesner Lyons, "Two Perspectives On Self, Relationships, and Morality, *Harvard Educational Review* 53 (1983), pp. 125--146.

perception of need."[128] From this perspective responsibility does not mediate between judgement and action but actually provides the framework within which the moral judgement is made.

Gilligan's theories on the origins of different selves have been challenged by Lykes for having too interpersonal a focus and for ignoring the way in which "notions of the self are embedded in and reconstructed from social arrangements."[129] This does not exclude mothering, which is socially constructed, but emphasises the effect on self and moral development of the differing experiences of power and powerlessness. Lykes suggests that "individuals from majority groups (e. g., white upper class males), whose material conditions and social relations are most likely to be consonant with individualism, would be more likely to have a notion of the self as autonomous individual". Persons in less powerful groups (e. g., women, people of colour, working class people) are more likely to perceive contradictions between the assumptions of autonomous individualism and their social experience. "These individuals may also experience group solidarity or some sense of the 'giveness' of 'being in relation', for their

---

[128] Carol Gilligan, "Remapping the Moral Domain", in *Mapping the Moral Domain*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 7.

[129] M. Brinton Lykes, "The Caring Self: Social Experiences of Power and Powerlessness", in *Who Cares? Theory Research and Educational Implications of the Ethic of Love*, ed. M. Brabeck (New York: Prager, 1989), p. 166.

survival as a group may seem only possible in relationship."[130] In response, the less powerful are more likely to develop a sense of self which she identifies as "social individuality", and her empirical research on adult working women and men in the USA demonstrated support for the idea that different experiences of collective action and varied memberships of social groupings are systematically associated with concepts of the self. Social individuals, as compared to autonomous individuals, are more likely to experience a "widening circle of relationship from childhood to adulthood, to participate actively in communities, in addition to work and family responsibilities [and to] describe themselves in terms of relatedness to friends, neighbourhood and society". Social individuality was found particularly "among women working at the lower ends of the occupational ladder" and among

> those who have in some way resisted institutional forces that excluded them from power. Involvement in the transformation of oppressive structures, in which one acts on a belief in the interdependance of all people or through which one is reinforced in one's sense of belonging through community, may serve to concretise an abstract sense of oneself as an "ensemble of social relations" and to provide a place where consciousness and action converge.[131]

The philosopher Tronto similarly suggests that an ethic of care may arise from a subordinate or minority status in

---

[130] M. Brinton Lykes, "Gender and Individualistic vs Collectivist Bases for Notions About the Self", *Journal of Personality* 53 (1985), p. 364.

[131] Lykes, "The Caring Self", p. 167.

society, rather than specifically from gender. She postulates that, given that subordinate groups, including women, disproportionately occupy the caretaking roles in our society, it may be that it is the daily experience of caring that fosters this particular moral orientation. The priviledged white male's dearth of caretaking experience is what misleads him into construing moral issues in purely abstract terms.[132]

Lykes's suggestion that actual engagement in communal political resistance may create a connected sense of self, and Tronto's that it is the practice of caring that creates a care focussed morality, are relevant to my work because they suggest a dynamic, interactive relationship between action, moral orientation and sense of self. Both writers also highlight the importance of differential access to power in creating circumstances where care and connection are more likely to occur, although neither state that these are the only circumstances possible.

Tronto's and Lykes's views are part of a much wider discussion of Gilligan's work about the degree to which moral orientation and sense of self are gender mapped, or might be the response to oppressive circumstances or different societal arrangements. The anthropologist Alun Fiske points out that ethnographic evidence shows that while all societies organise some relationships in terms of "rational benefit/ cost assessment", only a few cultures,

---

[132] Joan C. Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12 (1987), pp. 644--663.

such as our own, take for granted the "commoditisation of relationships, competitive entrepreneurial behaviour, selfish individualism and the rational maximisation of personal welfare through the exercise of free choice and contractual commitments. Other cultures consider such orientations pathological, despicable, or illegitimate." There are other, more common, forms of social relationship, particulary those based on a sense of community, or on an accepted hierarchy in which more caring and responsive behaviours are very common. Ethnographic evidence also shows that, whatever the culturally determined mode of social relationship,

> people engage in . . . relationships for the intrinsic rewards of the relationships themselves. [They] help others primarily to initiate, maintain, reinforce, or repair social relationships, not simply because of extrinsic restraints or because helping is merely an expedient means to some ulterior end.[133]

In my view none of these approaches is incompatible with Gilligan's, particularly if one regards gender largely as a cultural construct in itself.[134] It seems likely that one's sense of self and moral values are determined by multiple influences from childhood on.

From a somewhat different perspective, Lifton suggests

---

[133] Alan P. Fiske, "The Cultural Relativity of Selfish Individualism: Anthropological Evidence that Humans are Inherently Sociable", in *Prosocial Behaviour: Review of Personality and Social Psychology 12*, ed. M. S. Clark (London: Sage, 1991), pp. 176--214.

[134] Helen Haste and Jane Baddeley, "Moral Theory and Culture: The Case of Gender', in *The Handbook of Moral Development*, ed. W. M. Kurtines and J.L. Gerwitz (Erlbaum, 1991), pp. 223--250.

that it is particular historic and global forces that have recently transformed the nature of the self. One response is an increasing fluidity and malleabillity, which Lifton calls proteanism. He also identifies a rigid and fundamentalist response to these same forces.

Proteanism is defined as a psychological "flexibility, multiplicity and fluidity", characterised by "restless experiments, and odd combinations of involvements" that can occur either sequentially or simultaneously. The self increasingly has the capacity to move through a series of involvements and ways of being, or to hold at the same time highly varied, even contradictory ideas and feelings. He quotes the pre-presidential Havel as an example:

> I get involved in many things, I am an expert in none of them. In general,though I have a presence in many places, I don't really have a firm predestined place anywhere, neither in terms of my employment nor my expertise, nor in my education and upbringing, nor my qualities and skills. I write mercilessly sceptical, even cruel, plays and yet in other matters behave almost like Don Quixote and an eternal dreamer. For many people I am a constant source of hope, and yet I'm always succumbing to depressions, doubt and uncertainties.[135]

Lifton argues that "our potential for multiplicity emerges from our innate capacity to imagine and symbolise. But it is only during the modern era that . . . this capacity has been so radically expressed." The experience and behaviour of the self have been profoundly affected by three

---

[135] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation* (New York: Basic Books, 1993)

historical forces: the first is **historical (or psychohistorical) dislocation**; that is, a sense, particularly in the last few years, of a breakdown of old certainties and symbol systems resulting in a questioning of the validity of life experience, and an ambivalence towards traditional values. "Actions and decisions take on an ad hoc quality rather than being clearly structured by prevailing ritual and belief as they had been in the past." The second is the impact of the **mass media revolution**, which has meant that enormous numbers of people can "have access to any image, event or idea originating anywhere in the contemporary world or from any cultural moment of the entire human past". And where the availability of the electronic media is more limited, it would appear that the impact of information received this way can be even more significant. Moreover, the massive bombardment of diverse images presents people with alternatives. One can see that one's own frame of reference and lifestyle are not the only possibilities and that there are other ways to live.

The third historical development is the **imminent threat of extinction**, the realisation that everything we hold most dear, the planet itself, could disappear in an instant, through nuclear or other environmental catastrophe. Fiske, cited above in Part 1, suggested that imagery and knowledge of this threat is cognitively available to many people even if repressed on a day-to-day basis. The threat may be perceived in different ways. What matters is that the possibility of catastrophe and feelings of futurelessness

increases uncertainty and the adhoc quality of life.

Lifton suggests that proteanism which increases our capacity for creativity and survival is one response to these threatening historical forces. One important aspect of its creative potential is that by developing the capacity to hold multiple value patterns within ourselves we also increase our capacity for empathy, that is, awareness of how the other thinks and feels. He also points out that proteanism can manifest itself in a negative way. There is obviously the danger of superficiality, fragmentation, or the complete lack of coherence.

However, there is "another side to the historical coin, that of the constricted, totalised or fundamentalist self". These same historical forces that produce the protean self that is, an opening up, can result in a closing down. "The closing down, however, is itself largely a reaction to the perceived dangers of proteanism"; that is, against the confusion of formlessness and chaos and its own desire to open out. Lifton illustrates this by drawing on his own work with American fundamentalists, showing how openess and pluralism are perceived as danger and sin, and scepticism and doubt as the failure to acknowledge an eternal moral truth. "The fundamentalist self clings to a fixed structure of absolute purity and virtue that can never be, the quest is for unification within and without and above all a sense of control over that which cannot be controlled." Consequently there is rarely equilibrium. "It tends to be engaged instead in a continuous struggle against ever

present evil, including especially the evil of its own deep ambivalences." Lifton also describes the psychological appeal of violence to both the fragmented protean state - "where the sense of self can only take shape by living out a pattern of violence in accord with others expectations" - and to the fundamentalist because of "the appeal of purification: by destroying designated enemies one can reaassert one's own claim to absolute ethical and even scientific truth".[136]

Lifton's protean self clearly shares some characterisics with Gilligan's connected self, in particular responsiveness and empathy. Gilligan and Wiggins identify empathy as a crucial component of the connected self. "A more fluid conception of self in relation to others is tied to the growth of affective imagination, namely the ability to enter into and understand through taking on and experiencing the feelings of others."[137] Lifton's protean self also appears to have what could be seen as a caring value orientation, a "species mentality, an awareness of ourselves as members of the human species", that produces deep concern for others, and a consequent non-violent political commitment. This "species self" appears to similar Melucci's "planetary conciousness" that identifies New Social Movement actors.

One senses a convergence in these writers, coming from

---

[136] Lifton, *The Protean Self*.

[137] Gilligan and Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality", p. 287.

quite different perspectives, in identifying an interactive relationship between moral orientation, sense of self and a particular kind of political concern. Added support comes from Wingfield and Haste's examination of the relationship between cognitive style and political understanding. They looked at the way adolescents discussed themes such as social order, organisation and government, and found that those with a connected cognitive style tended to focus on the negotiation of conflicts and attempted to include all points of view: through attention to everyone's needs it was hoped that conflict could be avoided. In contrast, those with a separate orientation focused on rules and codes of practice. They presupposed the existence of competitive conflict and looked for ways to control it. Again, there appeared to be an association between female gender and a connected focus, in contrast to a male gender-separateness association. Interestingly, Wingfield and Haste describe political understanding as outside the "strictly moral domain". Certainly it is not often included in the domain or the dilemmas posed by moral psychologists, yet it clearly falls within Midgeley's definition of what is moral.[138]

The suggestion from all of this work is that it is the protean, or connected, care focussed self that is more inclined to non-violence. However, I want to mention two studies by Gilligan's colleagues that suggest a more complex relationship between moral orientation and attitudes to non-

---

[138] Lindy Wingfield and Helen Haste, "Connectedness and Separateness: Cognitive Style or Moral Orientation?", *Journal of Moral Education* 16 (1987), pp. 214--225.

violence. Ward interviewed thirty-seven adolescents of mixed ethnic background to elicit their thinking on violence. She discovered that the majority had experienced or witnessed violence in a family or neighbourhood setting, mostly as a result of disrupted human relationships, and that they used a moral language to discuss it. She also found that the moral judgements made could be categorised in four ways, each with a different understanding of the appropriateness of violence. Thus, she found that 40 per cent of those with a justice focus thought violence was justifiable when it was used to rectify or avenge unfairness, or in response to undeserved punishment. In contrast, those with a care focus found violence intrinsically wrong because it hurt people and was "unnecessary, since it could have been avoided through dialogue". Psychological pain was as of much concern as street crime and there was concern for witnesses as well as victims. Violence was understandable, although wrong, when people felt they had no other choice to protect themselves and others from danger. Some adolescents, however, combined both justice and care considerations and, in this case, in certain situations, such as when people had reached their limit and there was no other choice, violence was no longer wrong but justifiable. A frequent example given was of a woman using retaliatory violence to stop suffering, which was usually seen by the teenagers as empowering. Finally, Ward identified a fourth group where justice and care concerns were not simply combined but integrated, that is,

where "the justice and care ideas could not be pulled apart without destroying the meaning of the moral judgements". Violence for these teenagers was "acceptable", "tolerable and "fair" - but only within clearly defined limits - in order to prevent irreparable harm.[139]

Bardige, looking at students' written journal responses to a course on the Holocaust, identified a group, almost exclusively girls, who responded with what she calls "face value thinking". This could be identified by the immediate concrete responsiveness, the sense of outrage, disgust or injustice, combined with anger at the abusers and strong empathy for the victims. The response "integrated" justice and care concerns in the manner described by Ward, and was "combined with a strong desire to do something to stop them immediately (even violently). . . . The intensity of their involvement and their eagerness to do something were striking." What was significant was that such responses were associated with lower levels of cognitive, moral and ego development as conventionally defined. Yet only one of those not using face value thinking "used language that coupled emotion, shock and action". These more developmentally advanced students, using "composite" or "multiple lens thinking", did respond with feeling, but the emotions tended to be located in the self - "I got upset watching this" in contrast to "this is disgusting" - and

---

[139] Janie Victoria Ward, "Urban Adolescents' Conceptions of Violence", in *Mapping the Moral Domain*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Maclean Taylor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 175--200.

treated with wariness. They showed an increasing awareness of complexity, and greater capacity to understand others and thus take their needs into consideration, yet they had less certainty about the possibilities of personal action. "Immediacy [and] passionate clarity" in the face of evil appear for some reason to be lost. Growing sophistication actually appeared to diminish empathy and in some cases rationalised inaction.[140]

These two studies are particularly important for my own work because they demonstrate a clear relationship between attitudes to non-violence and different moral orientations. The "face value" perspective is also related to a clear need to act. And, in contrast to the findings from work done in the Kohlbergian framework, this need to act arises from strong emotions and is not related to a "higher stage" of moral development.

However, while both studies looked at attitudes, and while both urban violence and the Holocaust are political questions, the interviews dealt in terms of hypotheticals: what would or could one do "if"? They could not explore the actual choice of collective non-violence in an activist's life. It is by looking at the reality of non-violent actions and the life histories of those who create them that I hope to draw out some of the political implications of this suggestive body of theory.

---

[140] Betty Bardige, "Things so Finely Human: Moral Sensibilities at Risk in Adolescence", in *Mapping the Moral Domain*, ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 87--110.

5. Empathy

Bardige highlights the role of empathy in creating the need for action, and the other work reviewed above suggests that empathy, given its role in mediating a protean, flexible, connected, care focussed self, enhances the capacity for non-violence. It is therefore worth reviewing some of those areas of the literature on empathy that pertain to its relationship to non-violent behaviour and moral orientation.

One of the difficulties in reviewing this field is that there are conflicting definitions of empathy and the related constructs of pro-social and altruistic behaviour. In this section I will give my own definition and then review briefly some of the literature on empathy and aggression; the development of empathy; the relationship between empathy and moral judgement; and the role of empathy in a naturalistic study of non-violent altruistic behaviour.

I define empathy as the capacity to both **feel** and **know** how another person is feeling **as if** one were them. This is not sympathy - a word used synonomously in much of the research, but which I understand to refer to feelings **for** the other rather than shared **with** them. Nor is it a question of identification with the person, in that one does not want to become like them; rather, it is that one's own feelings resonate with the other's unconscious affect so that one experiences what they are experiencing, while at the same time maintaining a consciousness of one's own separateness. If "identification" does occur it is with the

other's "experience of feeling", not with the person him or herself. The experience of feeling can then result in a cognitive process of interpretation and hypothesis about the other's state.

Obviously, defined in this way the empathic capacity is neutral. One can conceive of certain situations where the capacity to hurt or manipulate another requires just this exquisite sensitivity to feeling. In fact, Feschbach found that intense euphoric empathy was associated, specifically in boys, with anti-social and aggressive behaviour.[141] However, much of the literature suggests that empathy is associated with prosocial behaviour,[142] prosocial being defined as "voluntary intentional behaviour intended to benefit another", and that it is negatively associated with aggressive, anti-social behaviour.[143] Gilligan and Wiggins use the word compassion or co-feeling to describe empathy in the positive sense.[144] Staub uses the term "reactive empathy", which "requires (in addition to shared feeling) a perception of the other's state (cognitive empathy) and a

---

[141] Norma Deitch Feshbach, "Parental Empathy and Child Adjustment/Maladjustment", in *Empathy and its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[142] N. Eisenberg and P. Millar, "The Relations of Empathy to Prosocial and Related Behaviour", *Psychological Bulletin* 101 (1989), pp. 91--119.

[143] P. Millar and N. Eisenberg, "The Relation of Empathy to Aggressive and Externalising/ Antisocial Behaviour", *Psychological Bulletin* 103 (1988), pp. 324--344.

[144] Gilligan and Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality", pp. 288--289.

caring about the other's need".[145]

The explanation suggested for the negative correlation between empathy and aggression is that when an empathic person behaves in an aggressive manner, their sensitivity to the pain of the other is likely to act as a form of negative feedback, disinhibiting further aggressive acts. Other research suggests that children subjected to physical abuse not only have less empathic parents, but are themselves likely to be less empathic.[146]

The research done on the development of empathy is important because it shows that the capacity for empathy appears to be fostered by socialisation processes similar to those identified by Flacks and others as significant in the upbringing of student activists. First of all, it should be stated that a large body of research has shown that there is an innate capacity for empathy and that it is relatively stable.[147]

---

[145] Ervin Staub, "Commentary on Part 1", in *Empathy and its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 106.

[146] See Feshbach, "Parental Empathy and Child Adjustment/Maladjustment"; and M. F. Squires, "Empathic, Nurturant and Abusive Behaviour of Normally and Abnormally Reared Girls", *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 40 (Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1979).

[147] See Martin L.Hoffman, "Personality and Social Development", *Annual Review of Psychology* 28 (1977), pp. 295-321; Ross A. Thompson, "Empathy and Emotional Understanding: The Early Development of Empathy in Eisenberg and Strayer", in *Empathy and its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 119--146; and E. Mark Cummings et al., "Early Organisation of Altruism and Aggression: Developmental Patterns and Individual Differences", in *Altruism and Aggression: Biological and Social Origins*, ed.

Empathy also appears to be fostered by secure early attachment, parental affection, and the availability of empathic models. Mothers in particular who model empathic, caregiving behaviour appear to have more emotionally responsive and helpful children than non-empathic mothers. Modelling by teachers and peers may be important. Inductive disciplinary techniques, rather than punitive or coercive ones, are also significant.[148] Other important factors were the degree of identification with the victim, either through similarity or shared experience, and the discouragement of interpersonal competition. Feschbach, for example, found that paternal emphasis on competition was associated with low empathy in sons but not daughters. She also found that all the above mentioned socialisation antecedents were more significant in girls than boys suggesting that "it is as though empathy in girls develops through identification, normative role adaptations, and positive childrearing experiences, whereas the routes to empathy in boys are as numerous as the diverse manifestations of empathy for this sex."[149] This finding is consistent with Gilligan's thesis that women are more likely to have connected selves because

---

Carolyn Zahn Waxler, E. Mark Cummings, and Ronald Ianotti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[148] Mark A. Barnett, "Empathy and Related Responses in Children", in *Empathy and its Development,* ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 149--153.

[149] Norma Deitch Feschbach, "Sex Differences in Empathy and Social Behaviour in Children", in *The Development of Prosocial Behaviour,* ed. Nancy Eisenberg (New York: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 315--337.

of empathic identification with their mothers. The implication of both Feschbach's and Gilligan's work is that the greater tendency to non-violent behaviour in women arises, in part, from the specific way girls are socialised by a caregiver of the same sex.

In both sexes it would appear that values transmitted through induction, not coercion, with an emphasis on cooperation rather than competition, encourage both the development of activism and empathy. It would be a mistake, however, to assume a direct relationship betwen empathy and action. Chapman and others found, in examining 4--11-year - olds' helping behaviour, that, while there was a correlation with empathy, there was a stronger one with a sense of guilt and personal responsibility (assessed through examining childrens' responses to stories describing hypothetical distress situations), suggesting that this may be an essential component in the connection between empathy and action.[150] This is reinforced by the finding that 5-year-olds who paid attention to distressed peers and were capable of active intervention for the most part "did not believe they were supposed to help when competent adult caregivers were present".[151] Empathy may create a need to act but this will not be followed up if the individual does not feel

---

[150] Michael Chapman et al, "Empathy and Responsibility in the Motivation of Children's Helping", *Developmental Psychology* 23 (1987), pp. 140--145.

[151] Marlene Zelek Caplan and Dale F. Hay, "Preschoolers' Responses to Peers' Distress and Beliefs About Bystander Intervention" in *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 30 (1989), pp. 231--242.

responsible.

Hoffman has explored the relationship between empathy and moral judgement, drawing on his own and others empirical research. In contrast to Gilligan, he is arguing that empathy is not only associated with a care-focussed morality: different empathic affects are involved in all moral judgements, and they may be part of the motivation to act. Firstly, he suggests that, rather than one, there are three universal moral principles: a principle of "justice and fairness", a principle of "impartial benevolence", which he interprets as a "principle of caring about the well-being of others", and a "principle of maintaining social order", and that they are not mutually exclusive either within the individual or society.[152]

Secondly, he suggests that mature empathy consists of a number of affective states: empathic and sympathetic distress, empathic anger, and empathic guilt. He then argues that all moral encounters arouse such affects in one form or another because, even in hypothetical situations, such encounters involve making causal attributions and considering victims. At the same time, such encounters arouse moral principles, and which principle is most salient is likely to depend on the affect aroused. Thus, sympathetic distress is likely to be coupled with a principle of caring, while empathic anger may be associated

---

[152] Martin Hoffman, "The Contribution of Empathy to Justice and Moral Judgement", in *Empathy and its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 47--81.

with justice. "The resulting co-occurrence of the empathic affect and moral principle creates a bond between them that is strengthened in subsequent occurrences." Thus moral principles may themselves aquire an affective charge and become " hot cognitions" which directly arouse affect, even when the moral encounter is hypothetical. On the basis of affect and principle combined, moral judgements are made, which Hoffman points out might thus be limited "by empathic bias towards the familiar." This, he argues, can be limited by various socialisation techniques that encourage "impartiality and multiple empathising." The importance of Hoffman's work is to highlight the role of affect in moral decision-making and to show that the quality of the aroused affect may have a determining role in moral orientation, and thus presumably in choice of method of action.

Most of the research discussed above has been based on studies done in the laboratory or through naturalistic observation of small children. There are some studies that look at the role of empathy in a naturalistic setting. One important example is the study by Oliner and Oliner of non-Jewish rescuers of Jews during the Second World War. This massive study used qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the life histories of 406 rescuers matched against 126 non-rescuers. The purpose was to establish whether or not there were some defining characteristics of the altruistic personality. Oliner and Oliner present the rescue activity firmly in its historic and cultural context, detailing those aspects of physical

geography, state policy, and cultural attitudes to Jews within society that facilitated or worked against rescue. However, there were rescuers and non-rescuers in all societies. The picture that emerges is that, while external factors such as knowledge, opportunity, the degree of risk, and material resources contributed to whether rescues occurred or not, the two groups could not be distinquished on this basis alone. Both groups had access to knowledge about Jews in their communities, and both groups heard about or witnessed their treatment. However, there was a difference in the significance of the knowledge to each group. "At some point, for rescuers, awareness became attention and attention became focused concentration on what was happening to particular people in specific contexts."[153] Similarly, while they could not be distinguished by the form or degree of religiosity, they did differ in their interpretations of religious teaching, the rescuers putting an emphasis on the common humanity of all people.

The different meaning and significance given to events by the rescuers appeared to arise from a distinct ethical orientation in which the language of care predominated: "pity, compassion, concern and affection" extended beyond family and friends and compelled action. "It meant assuming personal responsibility . . . because failure to act meant acquiescence in the consequences."[154] Moreover, such values

---

[153] Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1988), p. 123.

[154] Ibid., p. 168.

appeared to be integrated into rescuers' lives long before the war, and rooted in personality. Rescuers could be distinguished by a greater capacity to be moved by pain: "sadness and helplessness aroused their empathy"[155]; a greater sense of responsibilty and commitment; and, particularly, an inclusive orientation that led them to be more disposed to see others as similar to themselves. Rescuers tended, for example, to have a wider circle of friends. They also had a marked sense of efficacy and competence.

The Oliners' findings on how such a personality emerged is in keeping with the research dicussed above. Parents of rescuers were more inductive reasoners, used less physical coercion, while encouraging feelings of autonomy, respect and internal control. One group of rescuers described their family relationships as particularly close. In this group, values were learnt directly from parents and were often set in a religious context, emphasising caring for others and self reliance. However, strong family values and attachments were not the only source of psychological strength. The Oliners distinguished three other groups, one "who developed their extensive orientation primarily through close contacts with Jews"; another with a "more abstract sense of connectedness . . . marked by broad social commitments, an intense sense of personal responsibility for the welfare of society as a whole"; and a final group of "egalitarians" who "derived their sense of responsibility to

---

[155] Ibid., p. 174.

others from their strong feelings of similarity to humankind generally and empathy for persons in pain." The themes of empathy and inclusion run through all of these but are differently expressed.[156]

Similarly, the Oliners emphasise that there was a variety of pathways through which the rescuers were actually catalysed into action. Thus "most commonly . . . rescuers were aroused to act by external authorities whose values and standards they had internalised [and] perceived helping Jews as a means of expressing and strengthening their affiliations with their social groups." The second significant group was an empathic group which had a "particular capacity to focus on others' needs and to be moved by their distress." A third small group was motivated by "autonomous principled motivations". Interestingly, the Oliners show how motivations changed over time. Both the normocentric or principled orientation that motivated the first act of rescue could become more empathic through continuing relationship with the rescued.

As a result of this research, the Oliners identify two prototypical personalities: an "extensive" one characterised by strong attachments, empathy, care-focussed values, and an inclusive orientation to others; and a "constricted" one, in which the external world is perceived as "largely peripheral except insofar as it may be instrumentally useful. More centred on themselves and their own needs they pay scant attention to others, [they are] marked by detachment and

---

[156] Ibid., pp. 184--185

exclusiveness." The Oliners emphasise that these are prototypes - acts of rescue were carried out by constricted personalities and extensive ones remained as bystanders; some had only aspects of one personality or the other. However, the Oliners found the distinctions significant, and concluded that "the rescuers' inclination to act depended largely on rescuers' interpretation of events, which was largely the product of characteristic ways they interpreted their relatonships to others".[157]

Thus, the Oliners' work appears to confirm the relationship suggested by the research above: that there is a strong relationship between moral orientation, sense of self, the capacity for empathy and a very specific type of action. It is important, with regard to my own work, to note that rescuers, although not collective actors in the political sense, almost invariably relied on informal networks of support and cooperation to do the work. In addition, their action could be construed as non-violent. Although some were also engaged in resistance activities, the majority were not, choosing to make rescue work their form of resistance. The non-rescue group did include a significant number of individuals engaged in resistance. So this extensive, empathic, personality does appear to be connected to a particular form of action. The picture presented also challenges Hoffman's concern that empathy may bias moral judgement towards the familiar. Most rescuers acted on behalf of complete strangers.

---

[157] Ibid., pp. 249--253.

6. Autobiographical and Biographical Studies of Non-violent Activists

Unfortunately, the more in-depth studies have focussed on the lives of exceptional men, such as Martin Luther King and Gandhi. However, they are worth briefly reviewing to see if there is any confirmation of the suggestions arising from the research summarised above. What comes across is that the choice of non-violence appears to be fostered by strong religious and moral values and a close and caring family atmosphere.

Gandhi, for example, grew up in a family that was obviously extensive and inclusive in its outlook, and strongly attached to him as the youngest child. What also comes across from Erikson's study is the fluidity and protean nature of Gandhi's life: his transformations from young lawyer, to volunteer for the British army in the Boer war, to political tactician, to spiritual father of a nation. Non-violence as an idea comes from his reading, but it is developed and reinvented throughout his life as the result of the interplay of historical circumstances, his own personality, and the activities of his followers. Gandhi's own writings record his constant adjustment and changes of mind as he "experiments with truth."[158]

Similarly, Martin Luther King describes the choice of non-violence as emerging from his own reflection and reading

---

[158] Erik H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: Norton, 1969).

in the fields of philosophy and theology. Gandhi hmself was an influence, but it was the experience of the Montgomery bus boycott, which was not his initiative but for which he became spokesperson, that transformed him. "Living through the actual experience of protest, non-violence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life."[159]

Adam Michnik, one of the most articulate Polish intellectuals behind Solidarity, Poland's non-violent political movement, does not come from a religious tradition and does not speak in the language of care and connection that marks some of the rhetoric of Gandhi and King. Nor is he a pacifist. He sees non-violence as the assertion of dignity and autonomy in the face of manifest injustice and oppression, and as the best tactical option of the times. What one gets from his writings is a sense of what Hoffman would call empathic anger and also compassion for his enemies. Most significantly he sees the use of non-violence as a way of asserting moral difference from the oppressors and as a way of avoiding the corruption of "revolutionary violence".[160]

Thus, this autobiographical material reinforces the Oliners' finding of multiple pathways to action. The choice of non-violence can be both the expression of empathic

---

[159] Martin Luther King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence", in *The Pacifist Conscience,* ed. Peter Mayer (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1966), p. 407.

[160] Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, trans. Maya Latynski (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), pp. 87--89.

concern, and of autonomous principles, and both motivations may occur in the same individual.

Overall, the picture that seems to emerge from this wide body of literature is that, while the choice of non-violence may simply be due to pragmatism, for many it is an active choice strongly related to an individual's value orientation and sense of self, which themselves relate to societal arrangements, historic forces, upbringing, gender, and the capacity for empathy. These are dynamic relationships. Engagement in non-violent action itself may alter the individual's values and sense of self. What is also clear is that the choice of non-violence is not only tied to a connected, care-focussed self. Concerns about justice and autonomy and the need to establish a different and separate identity, as a group or as an individual, may also underlie the choice of non-violence. The question then remains whether this is a different form of non-violence. This is explored further in Chapter 9.

Chapter 4

RATIONALE

All research is in some senses autobiographical and it should now be clear that my decision to examine the process of engagement in non-violent collective action was not arbitrary. It arose out of the desire to understand my own lived experience, and the experiences of those around me, and to make sense of the cross-cultural continuities that I had observed. At the outset I had no particular hypothesis or model that I wished to test. My thinking was informed by three sources: my experiences as a journalist and total participant; my reading in the fields reviewed in Chapter 3; and my reading and re-reading of the data gathered during my own fieldwork, from taking life histories and doing participant observation.

What I discovered was that my earlier, intuitive understanding, developed on the ground, and my later systematic research, challenged some of the established orthodoxies in the field. It also demonstrated the significance of some of the current research on moral development and empathy for the study of political action.

Firstly, my research findings challenge the global model of protest behaviour that fails to separate non-violent collective action from other forms of protest, such as riots, or from the development of totalitarian movements. It demonstrates the need for a sharp focus. In discussing the development of political commitment one needs to specify

the kind of commitment, to what issues, and in what period.

Secondly, it challenges the idea of a unitary explanatory model of commitment. My reading revealed a number of such models that appeared to talk past each other and take a reductionist approach. My findings challenge the idea that political engagement is an ahistoric, decontextualised, irrational process. It also challenges the idea that engagement occurs simply as a response to structural injustice; or only when sufficient resources are available in the form of leadership and networks.

In keeping with the work of Andrews and Melucci, my research suggests that political engagement may arise not only as the result of psychological processes located within the individual, or simply as a response to the external world, but rather as a unique combination of the two. It is a particular individual's response to a particular set of historical circumstances that results in engagement. However, unlike Melucci and Andrews, my focus is on the precise dynamics at work in the first stage of the process.

Indeed Andrews, whose work is closest to my own in challenging the reductionist individualism of traditional political psychology, has to my mind swung too far and ignored crucial aspects of individuality. Her biographies provide rich detail as to the personal circumstances of the respondents - their family background, education, class, work and so on - but little on their interpersonal relationships, temperament, character, inner psychic life, or on their strategies for coping with significant personal

rather than historical events, such as marriage or the birth of children. These aspects are surely relevant to their reaction to the wider world. Andrews's argument is that it is the "social" orientation of the activists, the "anti-individualism" that has fuelled their interaction with the outside world which has given them a sense of identity, and that this sense of identity is more easily defined in terms of what they do and to what groups they belong, rather than of what they feel about themselves or those intimate with them. Yet the fact that the activists perceive themselves in this way does not mean the author could not have shared her own perceptions or followed up the hints that they do give. Such an exploration might have filled some of the gaps that emerge in her description of the process of radicalisation. What made her activists sensitive to the particular books, individuals and organisations? These influences were also available to many others undergoing the same historical experiences, and yet they did not become active, or their activism took another form - joining the fascist party, for example. It is possible that the transmission of family values, temperament, and certain significant emotional experiences all played a part. However, while her data hints at this, Andrews does not really explore these aspects. In concentrating on both personal and historic formative experiences, including traumatic ones, and focussing on the initial process of engagement, I plan to address this gap.

Thirdly, my work suggests that the choice of and

commitment to a method of action is as important in understanding the process of engagement as commitment to a particular issue. In this form of political engagement, means and ends are closely intertwined and both need to be examined in any study of commitment.

Fourthly, through reading widely in a number of disciplines I have noticed a convergence as different specialties touch on the same themes. I have demonstrated in Chapter 3 how a number of writers have concerned themselves with the threats of late twentieth century life and the new forms of collective response this has generated, be it planetary or species consciousness, and the new forms of self: protean, flexible, extensive, or connected. There is an increasing interest in the genesis of altruistic and empathic behaviour and in the formative experiences that produce it. However, the writers in their particular fields have not explored the implications of their work for the genesis of collective non-violent action or taken the perspective of individual life stories as a starting point.

I have not come up with a single explanatory model of the process of engagement. Rather my work represents, through the use of individual narratives, both a synthesis and a critique. It demonstrates, firstly, that there is more than one route to political commitment and, secondly, that the choice of non-violence arises from a number of different perspectives. Each of the subsequent chapters of the thesis develops these two overall themes in different ways.

Chapter 5 is a description of the three groups and of the political and historical context in which they emerged. As I have argued above, I do not see history as the background against which individual engagement occurs; rather, such engagement arises out of a continuing and transformative interaction between individual and historical events. Thus a thick description of those events is required, including the emergence of the collective as a collective. This description has four main functions. It details a major component in the process of engagement, and in particular shows the different role that fear played in each political culture, in relation to the genesis of collective action. It provides a ground map in which to locate my respondents' lives without constant recourse to explanatory footnotes. It increases the reader's understanding of the nature of the action and of the modes of non-violence with which my respondents became involved. Finally, it shows the way the movement as a collective helped to create the historical context which generated the growth of other movements and further commitment. I have described this kind of political action as the politics of connection, and this chapter makes it possible to explain why.

Chapter 6 takes the focus back to the individuals and their pre-activist lives to examine to what extent this may have influenced their later engagement. In particular, it looks at whether engagement in the collective was preceded by other forms of social engagement. And it examines the

role of family life and other experiences in influencing the values and politics of the respondents.

Chapter 7 looks specifically at the process of engagement. In particular, the narratives show that there is more than one path to commitment; that both emotional and cognitive processes are significant, and that, while there are cross-cultural continuities, there are significant differences in the role of fear which are crucial to understanding the timing of initial involvement.

Chapter 8 sharpens the focus further to look specifically at the role of personal trauma in engendering political engagement. In particular, the narratives of my respondents challenge Lasswell's thesis that political activity arises from the irrational displacement of repressed hostility. In contrast, I draw on the work of analysts such as Alice Miller to show the importance that acknowledged personal traumas may have in engendering creativity, which includes political commitment.

In **Chapter 9** I have two aims. One is to illustrate the complexity of the relationship between the choice of non-violence and moral orientation, and to show the overiding influence of political culture on moral focus. The other is to show the interactive and dynamic nature of that choice. Engagement in non-violence can create a collective dynamic that affects one's own moral orientation and sense of self, and it impacts on others.

In the **Conclusion** I look at the significance of my own work and findings, including my methodology, for other work in this field.

CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICS OF CONNECTION: THREE ANTI-MILITARIST MOVEMENTS IN THE 1980s

Non-violent collective action does not arise out of nowhere. Movements are created by individuals interacting with the historical circumstances in which they find themselves. Once in existence, the movements themselves become part of the historical and political context in which the individual acts. Some of the individuals in my study were motivated by an issue to start movements, others were inspired by the movement to act on an issue. Some changed the movement's focus of action, some left the movement because it had changed. In all cases the way the process of engagement occured can only be fully understood in the context of the emergence and development of the movement, within its particular historical, political and cultural setting.

Thus, I am adopting Runyan's situational interactionist perspective, which clearly requires a full understanding of the situation with which my respondents interact. Therefore, my purpose in this chapter is to provide an account of three antimilitarist movements in the 1980s and the historical context in which they emerged. I should make clear that this is not an attempt at a critical historical analysis of the period. What I want to do is, firstly, provide a ground map in which the individual experiences recounted in later chapters can be located. Secondly, the chapter will provide a rich description of what I regard as

a major player in generating engagement in non-violent action: history, and in particular the history of the respective movement which, like the individuals out of which it is composed, has its own life cycle, which attracts different individuals at different stages.

One aspect of the movement history that concerns me is the significant role of fear. Fear has its origins both within the individual and the external environment. I explore in Chapter 7 the crucial role fear has in both motivating and inhibiting action. This chapter will show that each political culture generated a particular kind of fear, exemplified by both by the targets of protest and the coercive methods used to inhibit collective action.

Thirdly, this chapter will show the cross-cultural continuities between these movements, continuities which I argue are part of a common response to the global context of the Cold War. And, fourthly, I will show how these movements express what I define as a politics of connection. A politics of connection puts a primary emphasis on relationships. There is a concern with relationships between participants within the movement; between the object of action and other issues; and with relationships with the perceived opponents. Hence the concern with method as an end in itself. The non-violent methods used by the actors, in rhetoric, and in symbolic and actual forms, express these relationships, and the choice of non-violence demonstrates a desire to transform rather than disrupt or break relationships. In contrast the objects of action - military

conscription and nuclear weapons - are in all cases seen as, amongst other things, disruptive and deeply harmful to relations within society.

Although I stressed in the introduction that movements cannot simply be treated as collective actors, in order to sketch their history I must do exactly that, and the struggle to give each a fair representation immediately throws up the problems any historian of contemporary social movements must face. Only part of the record is available; it is not possible, because of lack of access to government papers, to honestly assess the movements' perceived impact on the state. All the groups lack an institutional base, with minute books, formal accounts, or defined membership. They are protean in form, and while they have each generated a wealth of documentation in a variety of media, such as newsletters, leaflets, films, books, and reports by outside observers, these sources cannot represent the whole; indeed, with most of the Greenham and WiP material, there is usually a written proviso that they should not be taken to do so.[1] Oral history is obviously a crucial source, but that also is clearly partial, given the pluralism of the groups.

---

[1] Jill Liddington has referred to some of these problems in her attempt to provide a preliminary history of the Greenham encampment: *The Long Road to Greenham: Feminism and Antimilitarism in Britain Since 1820* (London: Virago, 1989) p. 221.

The New Cold War

1979 was the year that detente definitively came to an end. Arguably, it had been ending for some years previously as a result of policy shifts within the USA. Throughout the 1970s, the USSR had continued both its attempts to achieve nuclear parity with the USA and its cautious and arbitrary support of liberation movements in the Third World. By the mid-1970s the USA and its allies had realised that detente was not a satisfactory means of "waging globalised social conflict to their own advantage"[2], and had begun to make a strategic shift to a more militarist and aggressive stance. Halliday sees this as a direct response particularly to developments in the Third World, which was growing in importance as "a supplier of raw materials, particularly oil, a market for exports and a debtor."[3] "A cascade of third world revolutions", coming on top of a humiliating withdrawal from Vietnam and culminating in the Iranian hostage crisis, the Sadinista victory in Nicaragua and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, brought home the fact that the South was no longer "stable" and that traditional interests were at stake.

These factors, combined with the emergence of the new right in both the USA and Britain, found political expression in the elections of Mrs Thatcher in 1979 and

---

[2] Fred Halliday, "The Sources of the New Cold War", in *Exterminism and Cold War*, ed. *New Left Review* (London: Verso, 1982), p. 293.

[3] Ibid., p. 300.

Ronald Reagan in 1980. Both leaders had a strong ideological commitment to anti-communism. Reagan immediately embarked on "an unprecedented build up of nuclear and conventional forces."[4] He also embarked on covert support for right wing dictatorial regimes, anti-insurgency and the Contra war against the Sadinistas in Central America. Meanwhile Mrs Thatcher had earned her title of Iron Lady from Tass, for her strong condemnation of Soviet iniquities, as early as 1976.[5] Upon election "her instincts told her that the appropriate response to the expansion of Soviet power was to increase vigilance, spend more on defence and move closer to the Americans, who ultimately guaranteed British security".[6] Thus, her first year in office saw the decision to purchase Trident missiles as a replacement for Polaris, support a Nato decision to increase defence spending, and the endorsement of the 12 December 1979 decision to deploy cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in Europe.

---

[4] April Carter, *Peace Movements* (London: Longman, 1992), pp. 108--112.

[5] Brian White, *Britain, Detente and Changing East-West Relations* (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 139.

[6] Ibid., p. 140.

Britain: The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp

There appears to have been no single logic behind the decision to deploy intermediate range nuclear weapons (INF). They were a form of modernisation, replacing older short range nuclear weapons. More important to nuclear strategists was that they "plugged a hole in the ladder of escalating response".[7] The idea being that Nato, faced with possible defeat by conventional Soviet forces, needed a credible nuclear response short of all out nuclear war as an effective deterrent. The missiles also clearly had a political function. European allies saw their deployment as committing the USA to the defence of Europe and the USA saw them as reaffirming the strength of the alliance. However, to a European public increasingly troubled by the deterioration of East-West relations, the decision to deploy seemed like one more act of provocative sabre rattling that brought the world closer to the brink of nuclear war.

Why did these deployments arouse public opinion to such a degree? The main reason would appear to be that by late 1979 the public was becoming rather frightened. Public opinion surveys in various European countries in the late 1970s and early 1980s show that fear of world war peaked in late 1979 and early 1980 with up to 50 per cent believing that it was likely within the next ten years.[8] The

---

[7] Thomas R. Rochon, *Mobilizing for Peace: The Antinuclear Movements in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 9.

[8] Ibid., p. 47.

discussions around the new generation of nuclear weapons had brought to public attention the shift in nuclear doctrine that had occurred. Strategists were no longer talking about "mutual assured destruction", and deterrence no longer appeared to rest on the unethical but at least comprehensible idea of holding the other side to ransom. The talk was now of fighting a limited nuclear war in the "European Theatre".

Concern in Britain was also heightened by the government's decision to revamp civil defence plans and increase preparedness for a nuclear attack. The ludicrous inadequacy of the proposed defence measures[9] did little to comfort the public as to the adequacy of nuclear deterrence. There was also an increasing awareness that the introduction of cruise missiles into Britain, without discussion in Parliament and under United States control, was an abuse of the democratic process. Historian Edward Thompson, who highlighted this through his writings[10] and public meetings around the country, perhaps did more than any other single individual to arouse public opinion. The planned deployments of cruise missiles at Greenham Common airbase in Berkshire in 1983 and at Molesworth in 1984 gave the public a concrete and visible focus for their anxiety and a timetable within which to act.

---

[9] Central Office of Information, *Protect and Survive* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980).

[10] E. P. Thompson, *Protest and Survive*, Spokesman Pamphlet 71, 2nd ed. (London: Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1980).

And people did act, across Europe, in their millions.[11] CND (The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), for example, grew from less than ten thousand national members in 1979 to a peak of ninety thousand members in 1984, with an additional quarter of a million active in local groups. This S curve of exponential growth was repeated in communities across the continent. In October 1983, five million people in Europe demonstrated their opposition to nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the issue had become part of mainstream discussion in British public life, debated within the political parties, trade unions, church, the medical profession,[12] and by lawyers, teachers and scientists, and within the military establishment itself.

Separate to these developments but growing in parallel with them was an autonomous women's peace movement.[13]

---

[11] James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), pp. 182--188. Hinton argues that the "Pentagon's plans for 'limited' nuclear war restored Europe to History - as the killing ground of the cold war". Many active on the Left had previously come to see "anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World as the decisive events in contemporary history". Now "newly identified as victims, Europeans could reappropriate historical agency" (p. 185). I quote this because I appreciate Hinton's understanding that a sense of historical role is part of the drive to action. For most of the British women in my study, who did not come out of the New Left, this particular shift did not, however, occur.

[12] British Medical Association, Board of Science and Education, *The Medical Effects of Nuclear War* (Chichester: Wiley on behalf of the British Medical Association, 1983); and Church of England, Board of Social Responsibility, *The Church and the Bomb* (London: Hodder and Stoughton/CIO Publishing, 1982).

[13] I have not attempted to document here the complexity of either the European or British peace movement. This is well covered in Hinton, Carter and Rochon, cited above. I merely wish to show the context in which an autonomous

Separate womens' organisations for peace, like the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, had existed since the First World War, and 1980 saw an increase in its membership and an influx of younger women. The late 1970s had also seen the gradual emergence of a specifically feminist analysis of militarism and non-violence, which challenged the equal rights-based socialist feminism of the earlier part of the decade, and argued that militarism was as much a product of patriarchal culture as the subjugation of, and violence towards, women. This analysis also stressed that non-violence could be an appropriate tool for feminist assertiveness and anger, which, unlike the violent liberation advocated by some feminists, could challenge the male value system itself, as opposed to either taking it over or joining it.[14] Another strand of influence was the growing anti-nuclear power movement, which had introduced the concept of affinity groups to Britain as a basis for organising mass non-violent actions.[15]

By the end of 1980 a wide variety of women's peace groups with very different philosophies of action were functioning in Britain. Most cooperated in a loose, newly

---

women's peace movement emerged.

[14] I have summarised a complex and multi-faceted discussion that went on on both sides of the Atlantic between women in the peace, enviromental and women's movements. Particularly influential were the writings of Barbara Demming and Andrea Dworkin. See also Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham,* pp. 197--221.

[15]. For example, at Torness, a proposed nuclear reactor site near Edinburgh in Scotland, where a mass occupation was organised in 1978.

formed network called the Women's Peace Alliance. And new initiatives kept emerging: one was the idea for a women-initiated march from Cardiff to one of the proposed cruise missile deployment sites: RAF Greenham Common, near the town of Newbury in Berkshire.

Anne Pettit, the originator of the march, could be said to be an embodiment of those separate strands of the 1970s described above. She had been involved in the women's liberation movement in the early seventies, and then moved with her husband to raise a family and run a smallholding in Dyfed in Wales. In 1980 she helped to found Carmarthen Antinuclear campaign, whose initial focus was nuclear power and the immediate threat of waste dumping in mid-Wales. By the end of the year, like many groups around the country, it had shifted its focus to nuclear weapons. Anne had read *Protest and Survive*, and had also read about a peace march from Copenhagen to Paris, led by women. She had also heard of an action the previous year, 1980, in the United States, when women had encircled the Pentagon as "the workplace of imperial power that threatens us all".[16] The idea caught her imagination and she determined on organising something similar in Britain. Greenham was the obvious focus.[17]

Yet the interesting thing is that the majority of women who joined the original march had had little experience of either the women's movement or of political organising of

---

[16] Ynestra King, "All is Connectedness: Scenes From the Women's Pentagon Action USA", in *Keeping The Peace*, ed. Lynne Jones (London: Women's Press, 1983), pp. 40--64.

[17] Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, pp. 222--225.

any kind. Some were already in local CND groups, others felt ignorant "about the peace thing" and saw the march as a way of learning. All were attracted by the idea of acting clearly as women. Some spoke of being deeply afraid.[18] It was the lack of media interest over the two weeks that the march took to reach the base that led to the decision that four women would chain themselves to the base fence on arrival at the camp, and that they would demand a televised debate on the issue of cruise missiles between the women and a government representative. These decisions evolved through lengthy discussion during the course of the march, setting a pattern that would endure for years: action arising organically in response to immediate need.

The press took a little interest in the chained women. The peace movement, particularly local members in Newbury, was enthusiatic in its support, sending messages, bringing food and equipment, and encouraging the women to set up a more permanent encampment. Within a week the decision to do so was made. The response of the Ministry of Defence was to state that the matter had been fully debated, citing occasions when it had been discussed in five British universities, and that the campers could stay as long as they wished.

For the first year the camp remained relatively unknown outside the peace movement. Yet it was becoming established. Some women had put themselves on the electoral

---

[18] Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire* (London: The Women's Press, 1983), p. 12

register. They were paying water rates, receiving post, and inspiring imitations at military bases around the country. In February 1982 a crucial decision was made to make the camp women only. Again this decision arose very much out of immediate circumstances: a concern that, with men present, women were again falling into the servicing roles that they played at home, and an anxiety that men provoked a more violent response from the police on actions and seemed less able to de-escalate conflict.

The stated reasons for the march being a women's initiative in the first place had been to challenge the gender-based division of society and culture which overstressed what many women saw as the "masculine" values of competition, aggression, objectivity and detachment, and undervalued the "feminine" ones of compassion and caring, thus excluding women from power and providing a basis for militarism and the development of nuclear weapons.[19] Many women were coming to feel that a challenge to the "masculine" could only be made if women had the space to discover what "feminine" values really were, without the distorting effects of a dominant male presence. Some women were alienated and disturbed by the decision, arguing that this separatism mimicked the worst aspects of male chauvinism, others that the nuclear threat was not exclusive so neither should the response be. Women replied that their purpose was not to exclude men but, through positive

---

[19] "Womens Action for Disarmament: March from South Wales to Greenham Common", leaflet advertising march, 1981. Personal files of author.

discrimination, to include women, by marking out one space where women were clearly needed. There were many places to act as mixed groups. Nor, they argued, was this a return to "separate spheres" where women were seen as the natural peace makers. On the contrary, women working separately had the opportunity not only to reassert the feminine in a way that could be valued by all, but to discover strengths and abilities traditionally denied them: the organisational and political skills that belonged to the public domain from which they were normally excluded. Moreover, they believed that if men, in support, took up childcare and homemaking to enable women's participation, both sexes would be challenging the gender division that dehumanised them all.[20]

The women's argument that, if they were left to themselves new ways of working would emerge that could be used by the whole movement, proved justified by subsequent

---

[20] There is a vivid description of the violent response of the men at the camp to the decision in Harford and Hopkins, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire,* pp. 32-34. See also Lynne Jones, *Keeping the Peace* (London: Women's Press, 1983), pp. 86--88, and Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham,* pp. 259--263. I am unhappy about Liddington's use of the word "maternalist" to describe a main current of Greenham thinking. Maternal iconography - nappies, photos of children toys, etc - was an enormous part of the symbolic strength of the camp. Many of the women who participated were mothers and carers in one capacity or another, but this imagery had more to do with the assertion of the validity of women's personal experience as positive, life-affirming, and politically relevant, than with marking peace action out as women's special domain. Many feminists were wary of Greenham at the start because of this imagery. See. for example, Janet Radcliffe Richards, "Why Should Women have the Monopoly of Virtue?", *Guardian,* 10 May 1983. I should add that the debate was long running and multi-faceted: between women about the relation between women and peace, the importance of separatism, and the form separatism should take; and between women and the whole peace movement about women's right to a separate space for action.

events. What came out of the women-only camp over the next two years was a radical, innovative and imaginative form of non-violent direct action that had a worldwide impact. The insistence on leaderless, cooperative, empowering action that allowed for the expression of feelings and connected the personal and the political was exemplified by the "Embrace the Base" action on 12 December, 1982, when some 30, 000 women, in response to a photocopied chain letter, surrounded the base fence and pinned to it "personal items that represent the threat of nuclear war to us and that express *our* lives, our anger and our joy".[21] The living chain, inspired by the Women's Pentagon Action, sprang up again and again in the following years: between nuclear facilities, connecting embassies, cities, and along the Baltic coast linking countries[22]. In direct actions such as dancing on the missile silos; entering the base as snakes and dragons, or as bears coated in honey; removing the fence while dressed as witches: in all these women combined an increasingly bold assertiveness that confronted and mocked the nuclear state with an imaginative symbolism that communicated on multiple levels. Within this symbolism the theme of connection comes up again and again, most concretely expressed by the web. This was both an icon and

---

[21]."Women for Life on Earth Say" 'No Cruise Missiles at Greenham Common'", chain letter, 14 October 1982. Personal files of author.

[22] For example: CND action linking military bases at Burghfield and Greenham Common, April 1983; CND action linking East German and Czechoslovak embassies, Autumn 1984; West German antiimissile action linking cities, October 1983, ecological action along Baltic coast, 1989.

quite an effective form of obstruction, woven quickly to bind women together in actions or to temporarily immobilise equipment. Here is one woman's description from the "Embrace the Base" action:

> I saw again the web, the symbol of the Greenham women, woven in wool, into the fence and onto the grass, drawn on posters and on garments. Everywhere the web, and questions of its meaning were stilled as somehow from within the understanding grew. We are all interdependent, we are all responsible for each other, how delicate the strands, how strong the web. The ancient spider goddess weaving tirelessly the web of life, again and again and again, as often as it is needed. Never stopping, never hesitating, working tirelessly to build again what was broken torn or damaged.[23]

Through the constant ebb and flow of women to and from the camp, and increasing media attention, these ideas of non-hierarchical, less alienating and more spontaneous and imaginative forms of organising had permeated into the peace movement both at home and abroad. By the end of 1983 the term "Greenham Woman" had become synonomous in Britain with any woman who chose to take non-violent direct action for peace. An established women's peace network existed throughout the country, communicating largely by word of mouth and irregular newsletter, with the camp (which had now expanded to six camps around the nine-mile perimeter fence) as its symbolic focus.

The women had got their public debate. By January 1983 67 per cent of women and 55 per cent of men opposed the

---

[23] Harford and Hopkins, *Greenham Common: Women at the Wire*, p. 92.

deployment of cruise missiles. Many cited Greenham as a factor changing their opinion.[24]. Greenham was affecting Tory women and with a general election looming it was probably this factor more than any other that pushed a previously indifferent Mrs Thatcher into an offensive against the peace movement. At the same time the press embarked on a campaign of vilification and abuse of Greenham women, focussing on their life style, law breaking and the nuisance value of the camp. The emphasis was on women's "unnatural" and "unfeminine" behaviour, their disregard for "family" values, their sexuality, and their dirty and unconventional attire. Such coverage fed the vigilanteism that emerged in 1983 in Newbury. Women's benders (tents in which they lived) were burned or slashed with knives, some had blood or excrement thrown over them, there were attacks on the women themselves. The focus on the "evils" of the women and the eyesore their encampments created was in marked contrast to the relative lack of complaint about the missiles themselves. One incensed letter writer to the local paper wrote: "We are as digusted and repelled by their presence as they are by the arrival of cruise. At least cruise is clean. . . ." [25]

The women made no attempt to improve their image. They pointed out that women overly concerned with appearances and

---

[24] Beatrix Campbell, *The Iron Ladies: Why Do Women Vote Tory?* (London: Virago, 1987), and "Over the Greenham Fence and into the Poll Findings", *Guardian,* 21 January 1983.

[25]. James Duffett, Letter to the Editor, *Newbury Weekly News*, 1984.

domestic order were unlikely to be attracted to living in the mud and to scaling fences; that mud was dirty and hard to remove without running water; that living in a community open to any woman, next door to what they perceived as preparations for genocide, on permanent public view, was bound to produce friction and to make them surly and short-tempered with each other and the public at times. They argued that female assertiveness always challenged male supremacy and that that is why it was denounced, and that a society that was more frightened by babies being born and living in the open air, mothers that breast fed in front of school children,[26] and women loving women, than by nuclear weapons was a very damaged society indeed. They perceived their challenging form of action as part of the process of healing.

The combined efforts of the peace movement and Greenham were unable to prevent the deployment of cruise. The first missiles arrived in mid-November 1983, accompanied by a massive reinforcement of the base and the threat that unarmed demonstrators penetrating high security areas might be shot.[27]

---

[26]. A woman breast-fed her baby while giving a talk to local school children in Newbury. This was the subject of front-page headlines in the local paper, and provoked a lengthy correspondence in the local press. See "Peace Women Lecture Row Rocks School", *Newbury Weekly News,* 24 November 1983.

[27] A policy endorsed as reasonable by the Defence Committee hearings the following year. See "The Physical Security of Military Installations in the United Kingdom", vol. I, *Second Report from the House of Commons Defence Committee, Session 1983-84* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984), p. xiv.

Yet if the government hoped that deployment would demobilise the women or the wider movement, they were wrong. The cruise missiles' invulnerability to Soviet attack depended on the fact that at times of crisis they would be dispersed to secret locations in the surrounding countryside. Over the next three years, Greenham women, in combination with a growing network of non-violent resistance called "Cruisewatch", became expert at harrassing and disrupting the secret dispersal exercises, ensuring that not a single one took place in secret, and exposing the myth of invulnerability to detection and sabotage.[28]

It was, perhaps, this form of effective resistance that stimulated the authorities to begin serious attempts to "finally" evict the camp in the spring of 1984. Women had dealt with earlier attempts by exploiting the multiple ownership of land around the base and the fact that all of it, as common land, was open to the public for recreation. However, joint action by the ministries of Transport and Defence and the local council resulted in the temporary destruction of the oldest camp at the main (Yellow) gate. As an eviction it was a failure. The women, no longer able to build any form of permanent structures, simply became yet

---

[28] In January 1984 *Jane's Defence Weekly* reported that "training exercises had been shelved because of political problems" caused by "the continued presence of the peace protestors". See "Cruise Missiles Locked Inside Geenham Bse', *Jane's Defence Weekly,* 14 January 1984. In 1985 General Charles L. Donelly Jnr, Commander of the American Airforce in Europe, admitted that protestors had reduced by 25 per cent the frequency with which convoys were able to move outside Greenham: Joan Smith, "Officialdom Grinds the Peace Camps", *New Statesman,* 14 February, 1986.

more flexible and mobile and learnt to live in the open. Yet this eviction did mark the beginning of a new phase in the camp's existence. Over the next few months many of those who had been there for two or three years decided to leave and, while the publicity of the April eviction had brought new women to the camp, it was to a much harsher existence and a different framework of action than in previous years.

Pressure, both official and unofficial, was now unremitting. Evictions were taking place up to five times a day by the end of 1985.[29] The media showed little interest, and the lack of public exposure, while a relief in some respects, made the women increasingly vulnerable to dangerous physical attacks, both from short-tempered baillifs and military personnel.

Yet the women persisted. Numbers at the base (always difficult to estimate) fluctuated between ten and fifty, still more than in the first year. The focus of action had changed. Greenham was no longer about alerting the public to the presence of cruise missiles but about persistent non-violent confrontation with the nuclear state. This perpetual resistance, a sort of non-violent guerilla warfare with humour, took the form of frequent incursions into the base, including penetration of the high security areas, the removal and publication of secret documents, occupation of the air traffic control tower, commandeering of vehicles,

---

[29] Smith, "Officialdom Grinds", p. 13.

painting, and rollerskating and bicycling down, the runway and hangers: an endless series of actions that made a mockery of military security. The element of ridicule was an important part, as were growing relationships of mutual understanding, if not always respect, between some base personnel, the police and the women. This was combined with a growing understanding of the workings of the base, so that women were able to judge in advance when a convoy was due out and could so alert Cruisewatch. What is more, women had extended their area of operations to all the surrounding nuclear facilities: entering the atomic weapons research facility at Aldermaston (AWRE), the bomb stores at Welford, and climbing into F111 aircraft at Upper Heyford.

The bombing of Libya and the accident at the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl in April 1986 had highlighted the dangers of the whole nuclear cycle. However, nuclear technology had, from the earliest days, been seen as only the most dangerous symptom of more deeper and complex problems. By 1984 the rhetoric of connection was being turned into practice. Women picketed with miners' wives in the coal miners' strike and helped create the LINKS campaign that connected the problems of uranium mining and apartheid in Namibia, nuclear power, pit closures, and nuclear weapons.[30] Women campaigned for a Nuclear Free Pacific, against food mountains, shared meagre funds with women in Nicaragua and Tigre, and abseiled into the House of Lords to

---

[30] Anne Suddick, "Making the Links: Women Against Pit Closures", in *A Nuclear Future?*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Hilary Wainwright (London: The Socialist Society, 1986).

protest against Clause 28 (which aimed to make it illegal for local authorities to "promote" homosexuality). In fact, the dispersal of energy entailed sometimes created tensions at the camp among women hard pressed from coping with both nightwatches for the convoys and constant evictions. As one woman commented: "Greenham women may be everywhere but they certainly are not at Greenham."[31] The stress of maintaining an effective vigil grew as support for the peace movement waned generally. Yet Greenham was still the focus of an informal network of women and had had an irreversible effect on the mainstream peace movement. Greenham women were regularly elected onto CND council and at least token attention was paid to feminist practice and analysis, while the idea of women organising separately, if not acceptable, was at least an established fact. Greenham had introduced a "new creative culture of radical protest into Britain."[32]

It is clear that the government, even after missile deployment, did not feel it had won the nuclear debate. On the contrary, continuing domestic pressure is noted by Freedman as one of the factors pushing Mrs Thatcher to adopt a more dovish approach to East-West relations in her second

---

[31] Sarah Hipperson, "Are We Making the Best of Cruise?" *Women For Life on Earth,* Autumn 1984.

[32] Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham,* p. 281. I do not agree that "feminist argument and practice had become integrated into the mainsteam of analysis". The handling of a number of rapes at another mixed peace camp, largely by refusing to acknowledge that they had occurred, showed that the issue of male violence towards women was still a problematic one for the mixed peace movement. For many women at the camp the rapes confirmed their view that this was the fundamental problem underlying the nuclear issue.

term of office.[33] Concern about public feelings on the issue, and sensitivity to a growing debate on civil liberties, is probably what restrained the government from using the full force of the law against Greenham women. Anti-nuclear activists had received sentences of up to eighteen years in the United States for direct action,[34] and six British activists had received punitive sentences under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) in 1962. Yet, although on many occasions women were charged under the OSA, they were never prosecuted. The government was no doubt wary of the likely impact of an Old Bailey trial and conscious that a jury might not necessarily convict. Instead, pressure took the form of manipulating the charges to confine women to an unsympathetic magistrates' court, a refusal to accept the camp address or to allow the women legal aid,[35] and the imposition of injunctions on particular women both to prevent them from going to the base or from encouraging others to do so. None of these pressures proved effective in undermining the camp, or in deterring women from action. By 1986,according to the *New Statesman*, Greenham arrests had

---

[33] Laurence Freedman, "Thatcherism and Defence", in *The Thatcher Effect*, ed. D. Kavanagh and A. Seldon (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 143--53.

[34] Helen Woodson received an eighteen-year sentence for hammering on nuclear warheads in a missile silo in Missouri, USA, in 1984. Other women received eight-year sentences for similar actions in 1986. See *Women's Peace Alliance Newsletter*, 27 March 1987.

[35] Lynne Jones, "Shut up and Listen", *New Statesman*, 2 March 1984.

topped four thousand.[36]

What this form of pressure did do was increase both the women's consciousness of the connections between nuclear weapons and the abuse of civil liberties, and give them the opportunity to develop a remarkable legal expertise. This was crucial in protecting them from mistreatment and harassment by the authorities, and it eventually led to a successful legal challenge to the government's restrictive by-laws, introduced in 1985 in order to control the protest. It also resulted in the astounding revelation that all military structures within the base were illegal.[37]

In fact, the greatest threat to the camp and the Greenham movement as a whole was internal. In 1987 a damaging split occurred between Yellow-gate women and the

---

[36] Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, p. 280. Accurate figures are difficult to obtain, as the deputy clerk at Newbury Magistrates' Court prevented the *New Statesman* from obtaining court listings, and women have not kept systematic listings. Figures have probably at least doubled since this date, many women being charged, fined and imprisoned under the now illegal by-laws.

[37] The government made its most significant attempt to deter the women's actions by introducing new by-laws in April 1985. These made it possible to charge women acting at or in the base with a number of minor offences. This had no deterrent effect whatsoever: over 100 women entered the base in the first week after the introduction of the by-laws, and 370 on a mass tresspass at the end of May. Moreover, the women challenged the government on the legality of the by-laws, arguing that they denied the rights of commoners. After a long drawn out legal battle taking five years, the Law Lords agreed that the women were right. Work for the case also revealed that the Ministry of Defence had failed to seek the necessary permission from the Department of Enviroment for building on the base and that, consequently, all the structures inside the fence were illegal. The ministry's response to this was to attempt a sleight of hand that retrospectively resolved the problem by extinguishing commoners' rights and offering compensation to those affected.

rest of the camp. This took the form of major disagreements over what the camp was about, who constituted a "Greenham woman", how to confront racism, what constituted non-violence, and the role of leaders. There were ugly and painful scenes and meetings, many women found friendships irreparably broken, were deeply hurt, and chose to withdraw.[38] Yet the camp continued, perhaps largely due to the fact that the geography of the base allowed the two groups to function more or less autonomously, and support groups were able simply to choose the group with whom they had the most sympathy.

1987 also brought the INF treaty. This was the first treaty ever to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and was seen by the peace movement as a response to their efforts. However, the camp had always been about the physical reality, not words, and with convoy exercises continuing on a monthly basis that reality had not changed. Convoy exercises finally ended in autumn 1990 and the last missiles were removed shortly after. The camp remained for the next three years, still concerned with the issue of common land and still a symbolic focus for women engaged in anti-militarist action. For example, Greenham women from all around the country were heavily involved in protests against the Gulf War.

---

[38] The role of an outside group, "Wages for Housework", in fomenting this division is still debated. I only have access to papers and interviews that present one side of the debate. See, for example, Beatrix Campbell, "Crisis at Greenham", *Sanity*, November 1987, and "Greenham Women Everywhere", Camp Newsletter, issued by Blue Gate to mark the sixth anniversary of the camp.

Poland: Wolnosc i Pokoj (Freedom and Peace)

December 12 is not only a significant date for the history of the Cold War in the West. In the last hours of December 12 1981, Polish leader General Jaruzelski declared a "State of War" - martial law - and in the early hours of the following day, with the help of the Polish army, brought to an end Poland's attempt in self limiting revolution.[39]

Solidarity, the fifteenth-month-old, independent trade union, was completely unprepared for a coup, and in the short term the coup was successful. Links with the outside world were cut, the civilian telephone network disconnected, and over ten thousand activists confined in internment camps or prisons in the first year. Riot police - Zomo - and in some cases tanks were used to storm factories being defended by workers, and it is likely that between 50 and 100 people were killed during the same period.[40]

In the long run, however, "martial law was a failure .

---

[39] The precise factors which made the authorities opt for martial law rather than attempt a political compromise with society are well discussed in David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), pp. 148 ff. As well as more domestic considerations, the hardening of Western attitudes towards the Eastern bloc - as demonstrated by the threatened new missile deployments - also played a part.

[40] Neal Ascherson, *The Struggles for Poland* (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 223. Helsinki Watch reports that sixty thousand people were fined for participating in various sorts of protest in the first year of martial law. More than ten thousand were fired from their jobs for political reasons. See: Polish Helsinki Watch Committee, *Poland under Martial Law: A Report on Human Rights* (New York: US Helsinki Watch Committee, 1983), pp. 262--275.

. . carried out with a brutality that appalled and alienated the nation, and yet it was not brutal enough to terrorise the Poles into passivity".[41] Resistance was facilitated by the fact that Solidarity was more than just a trade union of ten million people. For one thing, as Ascherson points out, it was a very unusual trade union: its horizontal bodies that brought people of all trades together in regional branches and included groupings for students and farmers, and in which the better paid and organised could help the less well off, "was the shape of a political movement rather than a normal trade union".[42] In its fifteenth-month existence it had wrought an irreversible change of consciousness in Polish society. It had broken down artificial barriers between Poles - "barriers of money, class or caste, of region, of skill and profession . . . and had given back to Poles their feeling of community and common interest." The main division was now between civil society and the leadership of the Polish United Worker's Party.[43] As a consequence, it was not difficult for society to adopt the strategies recommended by some of the Solidarity leadership, now underground, to avoid a head-on

---

[41] Neal Ascherson, *The Struggles for Poland*, p. 223. Helsinki Watch documents seventy-two people who died directly or indirectly as a result of police action, prior to 1985. See: Polish Helsinki Committee, *Human Rights in Poland Since December 1981: A Report by the Polish Helsinki Committee to the Human Rights Experts' Meeting in Ottawa, May 1985*, trans. Bogdan and Elizabeth Wasiutynski (New York: Helsinki Watch Committee, 1985), p. 36.

[42] Ascherson, *The Struggles for Poland*, p. 207.

[43] Ibid., p. 215.

confrontation that might result in massive bloodshed, and, instead to create a strong informal and decentralised movement. The idea was to create a parallel society "where the government will control the empty shops, but not the market: places of employment but not people's livelihood: the state media, but not information: printing houses, but not important publications: post office and telephone services, but not communication: the schools, but not education." This was "evolution, not revolution"[44] And to some degree this is what happened.

Martial law had solved nothing, particularly the basic question of how to rconcile the interests of state and society. The economic crisis that had brought Solidarity and the government into head-on collision deepened, and society was even less willing to cooperate with any necessary reforms. Sanctions imposed by the West exacerbated the problems. Meanwhile, the use of force had weakened the theoretical underpinning of the system beyond recovery. Communist ideology had lost its last vestiges of credibility in its ruthless crushing of a genuine workers movement.

Yet the government, by the mid-1980s, showed no signs of giving way to opposition demands, in particular for the release of political prisoners and the re-legalisation of Solidarity. Martial law had been replaced by repressive

---

[44] Norman Davies, *A Short History of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 388. Davies provides a good summary of the debates on oppositional strategy at this time.

emergency legislation, such as that permitting the police to use physical force even when not physically threatened.[45] The authorities, however, while determined to exclude the opposition, did make some attempt to rebuild cooperation with some sectors of society, in particular intellectuals and the Church. Censorship laws, for example, were still the least restrictive in Eastern Europe. However, while the mass protests and the almost total cultural boycott of the first year of martial law had ceased, there was no evidence of reconciliation. For the most part people found solace in reading underground literature, attending patriotic masses, and retreating into private life. The government knew that sullen passivity was not consent. It was a stalemate. As Ascherson explains, the limits of possibility were well demonstrated to both sides by the murder of the radical priest Father Jerzy Popielusko. His "Masses for the Fatherland" had been immensely popular, and his abduction and killing by secret policemen in 1984 provoked a new wave of moral outrage and mass protest. The killers were then put on trial, though the senior government figures who were certainly involved were never implicated. What the murder and the subsequent trial showed was that "on the one hand, there were elements in the regime prepared to kill rather than lose control, and this fact - reinforcing the lessons of December 1981 - told the opposition that the price of all-out resistance was too high. On the other hand, the

---

[45] Polish Helsinki Committee, *Human Rights in Poland Since December 1981.*

regime was tacitly admitting that the price of reducing Poland to conformity and obedience was also too high."[46] No-one had a clear vision of what should or could happen next.

In this atmosphere the emergence of an independent anti-militarist movement seemed an unlikely development, yet that is what occurred. To understand quite how unlikely, it is first necessary to understand Polish attitudes to the peace issue in general. First of all, there is no anti-militarist or pacifist tradition in Poland. Two hundred years of armed struggle for Polish independence had made the army a respected institution in Polish eyes. This respect had not been completely destroyed by the army's role in the imposition of martial law. Meanwhile, the communist authorities' perpetual propaganda about peace, the dangers of the Western nuclear threat, and the peace-loving peoples of the Soviet bloc rang hollow in the ears of a society which had three times since 1945 (1956; 1971; 1981) seen Polish people killed by the Polish authorities, and had seen the Polish army used to invade a fraternal ally in 1968. Solidarity spokesperson Janusz Onyszkiewicz summed up the scepticism Polish people had about the Western peace movement: that it was at best an innocent dupe of the KGB, and that it completely failed to understand the nature of life under a totalitarian regime, from whence came the real threat to peace. "Lack of justice and fairness in relationships between nations, lack of truly democratic

---

[46] Ascherson, *The Struggles For Poland*, p. 227.

control of governments, the reduction of individuals to the status of objects, continually creates the danger of war".[47] The film *The Day After*, for example, had been greeted with cynicism, because, as Onyszkiewicz explained to me at the time, "anyone who lived through the forties and fifties in Poland is not going to be frightened by this film. We had a joke at that time which went 'Truman please drop it, we cannot stand it any longer'." Most Poles felt they understood the nature of real war - they had lived through it - and that the current harsh realities of daily life took precedence over the rather vague threat of apocalypse.[48]

However, there was a growing consciousness that in some senses Solidarity, in its disciplined non-violence and persistent resistance, was a real peace movement. Jacek Kuron, in an Open Letter "to all people in the world who care about peace" stated as much:

> From December the 13, 1981, Polish society has been blackmailed with the outbreak of war. The Poles remain alone in their responsibility for the destiny of their nation and world peace. By displaying extraordinairy patience they are today maintaining peace in the world. . . . Peace is impossible without the removal of the situation in which the armies of the Warsaw Pact stand ready to conduct war at any moment with their own society.

He therefore argued for the demilitarisation of Central Europe and stated that the world peace movements should

---

[47] Letter to Mient Jan Faber, Coordinator of the External Relations Sub-commitee, European Nuclear Disarmament Convention, July 1984. Personal Files of author.

[48] Rachel Adams [Lynne Jones], "Dialogue Across the Iron Curtain", *New Statesman*, 12 October 1984.

support the "peaceful struggle of Polish society against the military dictatorship".[49]

At the end of 1984 the Polish government itself took the step that was to initiate a genuine peace movement. On 8 December 1984 the Military Court of Justice in Szczecin sentenced a young draftee in the Polish People's Army, Marek Adamkiewicz, to two and a half years in prison for his refusal to take the military oath. Adamkiewicz had refused because the oath was in conflict with his personal and social convictions, in particular the demand that he "remain faithful to the *Government* of the Polish People's republic" and "steadfastly guard peace in fraternal alliance with the army of the *Soviet Union* and other allied armies". His action was no different from that taken by many young men, particularly since martial law. Previously such refusals had either been quietly ignored or the objectors dismissed from service on grounds of "ill health" or other pretexts. However in October 1984, in keeping with the greater political repression of that period, the military chamber of the Supreme Court had decided that oath refusal was equivalent to a refusal to serve and that refusers could therefore be punished with up to six years in prison. Adamkiewicz was well know in opposition circles as a former activist of Student Solidarity (NZS) and had already been interned for a year under martial law. In spite of the fact that his superior officers had praised him as a good

---

[49] Jacek Kuron, "Open Letter to All People in the World Who Care about Peace", *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (Warsaw), 7 June 1984.

soldier, the authorities no doubt wished that his punishment would serve as an example and a deterrent to others.[50]

The reverse happened. Adamkiewicz was well liked, and a circle of friends and academics petitioned the Council of State for the sentence to be quashed. They argued that "military service is a social issue, whereas the oath is an ethical one; it is an individual act of human conscience and thus it cannot be the object of duress".[51] The petition produced no response and in March 1985 some twenty young people from Warsaw, Poznan and Szczecin, including many old NZS friends of Adamkiewicz, organised a week-long fast at the Podkowna Lesna church on the outskirts of Warsaw. The point of the fast was primarily to demand the release of Adamkiewicz. However, during that week there were seminars and intense discussions on the peace issue as a whole. Prominent members of the opposition attended. The discussions crystallised a view that had been growing for some months, namely, that the time was ripe for an independent peace movement.

That it was the right issue at the right time was

---

[50] The main sources for this chronology are my own notes and records, which based on first-hand observation and interviews during the period 1985-1991. Additional sources are a chronology provided in *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj* (Seattle and Berkeley: World Without War Council, 1989), pp. 7-19; and Christopher Lazarski, "The Polish Independent Peace Movement", in *In Search of Civil Society: Independent Peace Movements In the soviet Bloc,* ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (London: Routledge, 1990). In general these sources agree. Where there is disagreement I have relied on my first-hand information. I have given my personal archives on WiP a preliminary classification, starting chronologically with WP1.

[51] *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj,* p. 7.

demonstrated by the almost simultaneous circulation of an appeal in Krakow. This appeal annouced the founding of a "Freedom and Peace" movement, "inspired primarily by the peace sermons of Pope John Paul II".

> The main aim of our movement will be to bring as many Poles as possible to true unambiguous understanding of Peace. "The word 'Peace' - said John Paul II - has too often become a slogan that puts asleep or misleads'. The word is nowadays more often used by those who utter slogans about peace cooperation and disarmament while trying to deprive free peoples all over the world of the means and the will to defend their liberties. . . . The intentions of those using the word peace are morally suspect and politically alien. Therefore, in the first place, we want to give peace activities back their moral and political value.

Secondly, the appeal insisted that personal freedom and human rights were a precondition for peace. Thus "there is no peace in communist Poland. We want to do all we can to broaden the space of human freedom in our country so that peace in Poland will be given a chance". Thirdly, it expressed the desire to cooperate with all those with similar goals both in and outside Poland and condemned the "ideological violence" being used against the Afghan people.[52] In May of the same year the Warsaw group signed this statement and Wolnosc i Pokoj (WiP) was born.

---

[52] Founding declaration of Wolnosc i Pokoj. English translation in "Letter of Freedom and Peace to the END Convention in Amsterdam", Krakow, 14 April 1985 [WP2]. WiP built on the relationship established with the Western non-aligned peace movement by an underground group called KOS, the Commitees for Social Resistance, who, through their published correspondence with the Western groups, had opened up the discussion on peace issues in underground circles.

WiP was a pluralist, informal and unstructured, and geographically dispersed movement from the start. Groups grew out of local friendship circles, and different emphases and viewpoints reflecting the founders' varied backgrounds and previous political experience were evident even at this stage. The Krakow appeal, for example, made no mention of military service or oath refusal specifically, and emphasised the threat of totalitarianism to peace. Some of the central figures there were former or current members of the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN).

In contrast, a central figure in the Warsaw group was Jacek Czaputowicz, ex-NZS, father of three, and a personal friend of Adamkiewicz. His comment on the Krakow appeal was "too much Freedom and not enough Peace", and he stressed that the movement should have "concrete, limited , achievable, Polish goals."[53] "What we are concerned with is the human individual. The movement has grown around one person. Our main aim is to help particular people - not parading slogans like "peace", "disarmament", etc. . . . Once we score on concrete issues like the release of Adamkiewicz, securing an alternative service or a change to the military oath, then will be the time to take up more general issues."[54] Czaputowicz felt that the West failed to realise that "the greatest threat to peace is the servility

---

[53] Interview with Jacek Czaputowicz, quoted in "Report on trip to Poland, July 8-22, 1985", END Polish Working Group.

[54] "A Conversation with Jacek Czaputowicz", *Solidarity Information Bulletin,* no. 117/119, reprinted in *Uncensored Poland,* December 1985.

and submissiveness of the individual in society as well as the army."[55] This point was emphasised in a letter to Western peace movements:

> The majority of us know that it is just as possible to be killed by a truncheon in a police station as by a death- dealing rocket, though death from a weapon of mass destruction is a question of tomorrow, whereas we face truncheons every day. A man blindly obeying army orders constitutes a greater threat to peace than the neutron bomb. The murderers of Auschwitz and the murderers of Father Popieluszko excused themselves by saying they were just carrying out orders.[56]

Both groups had actually seen where the current regime might be vulnerable. A challenge to the military oath was a challenge both to Soviet hegemony and to the authority of the Polish government. Compulsory military service was one remaining form of political and ideological control, which the government had used with effect in spring 1983 when it drafted large numbers of Solidarity activists into the army. Whatever the Polish public might feel about the "peace issue" in general, young people particularly were sickened by the militarisation of everyday life. Military training began at fourteen years with school classes in civil defence and handling weapons graded like any other. Military service was compulsory for all males and certain groups of females like doctors, and at nineteen all non-student males

---

[55] "Interview with Jacek Czaputowicz", *War Resister's International Bulletin,* May/June1985.

[56] WiP Letter to END Convention in Amsterdam, July 1985 [WP2].

were conscripted for two to three years, depending on the service. College students of both sexes had to undergo compulsory military training, which was treated and graded like an academic subject and therefore had to be "passed" in order for the student to graduate, after which all males had to undergo a short officer training. After return to civilian life all males had to carry military ID cards and remain partially under military jurisdiction until retirement. They could be regularly recalled for two to three month refresher courses. As stated above, there was effectively no conscientious objector status in Poland, in spite of a constitutional guarantee of liberty of conscience and religion.[57] Even the most non-politically minded youngster was aware of the humiliation and degradation of army life:

> The army is hell. . . . Officers and older soldiers are allowed to mistreat young recruits. There are frequent cases of nervous breakdown. . . , even suicides. . . . Let no one kid himself that the army is a school for life: it is often the cause of death.[58]

From the point of view of the state, soldiers who would not fight were just as threatening as workers who would not work. Yet, in confronting an independent peace movement on

---

[57] "Conscientious Objectors in Poland", *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (Warsaw), no. 143 [English translation: WP 6].

[58] From *Z Dnia na Dzien* [From Day to Day: army newspaper] 14, 14 April 1985, p. 358, quoted in Lazarski, "The Polish Independent Peace Movement", in *In Search of Civil Society: Independent Peace Movements In the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (London: Routledge, 1990).

this issue, they were hoist with the petard of their own propaganda:

> Persecution . . . would compromise their much cherished "dovish image", useful in the "international struggle for peace", and it would destroy the "liberal image" necessary for the extraction of Western loans. If the regime chose a moderate policy . . . an independent peace movement would bring several opportunities. The opposition, strong enough to ensure its existence and too weak to overthrow the regime, could not propose any viable program for the solution of the Polish crisis. This failure resulted in general frustration. The peace movement seemed to offer a new and unorthodox method of weakening the communist state and of reviving the opposition movement itself.[59]

One of the most critical decisions WiP activists made at the beginning was to act openly. Signing their own names to documents made them vulnerable to arrest, but it also allowed for growth, and WiP grew rapidly with small groups of activists in Warsaw, Krakow, Wroclaw, Szczecin, and Gdansk. Numbers were "difficult to judge, we have no lists of members, nobody pays fees", but there was thought to be a core of one hundred activists and supporters, "maybe 1000s".[60] Growth brought a rethinking and widening of the agenda as activists pushed for their own interpretation of the peace issue.

For example, many of the Gdansk activists had

---

[59] Lazarski, "The Polish Independent Peace Movement", in *In Search of Civil Society: Independent Peace Movements In the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 120.

[60] Interview with Piotr Niemczyk, *Poglad*, 16 February 1986.

previously been involved in punk and anarchist movements. Their anti-militarism was of a more fundamentalist variety than that of the WiP founders:

> We do not regard alternative service as a final goal, but as a means of getting rid of the army altogether. The struggle against the army is part of our programme, whose goal is to abolish state authority over the individual - more broadly, the elimination of violence in public life, the elimination of censorship and of the death penalty. We fight to protect the natural environment (we are opposed to Russian-style nuclear power plants in Poland). This cannot be achieved instantaneously (either by miracle or revolution) - it should be approached in stages, today's stage is the army!"[61]

Their influence, among others', on the agenda of WiP can be seen in the lengthy Declaration of Aims, produced by the group at Machowa in November 1985.

This was a deeper and more thoughtful statement than the previous declaration. It described WiP as having three "foundations": firstly, "the struggle for civic rights, religious freedom and for national independence". Secondly, a desire to educate Poles about the dangers of nuclear war: "the modern world once again faces the danger of war, with consequences for human civilisation which may prove irreversible. Many Poles fail to see this danger, treating

---

[61] RSA [The Movement for an Alternative Society] leaflet, "Schweik", July 1986, quoted in Franek Michalski, "Anarchism and Youth Culture in Poland", *Across Frontiers*, Winter 1988. Even anarchists in Poland held to the strategy of evolutionary change first formulated by Adam Michnik in his essay "A New Evolutionism", in Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, trans. Maya Latynski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 135--148.

it as a figment of communist propaganda. The threat of nuclear war, militarism and militaristic education goes unnoticed. This we want to change". Thirdly, "we want to foster knowledge which would enable people to discover a sense to life and their place in the world, a knowledge based on christian ethics, humanistic psychology, the philosophy of the East, and other trends in human thought which treat man as a subject". The statement then dealt with the problems it saw as part of its agenda. These were: "human rights", including opposition to the death penalty; "National Liberation", which included the "support of nations oppressed either ideologically or by a foreign power", and for the "striving of ethnic groups and national minorities for autonomy and a degree of self determination"; the "danger of War" including nuclear war, and the problems of both the oath and compulsory military service; "preservation of the natural environment"; "starvation in the world"; and "the development of man".[62]

This wide ranging agenda clearly reflected the priorities of different groups, a recognition of interconnection of issues, and the influence of the Western peace movement with whom WiP were in growing contact.[63] Perhaps it was recognition of their own pluralism that

---

[62] *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj,* pp. 22--27.

[63] My impression, from numerous articles and discussions, was that the anti-nuclear agenda was always secondary. WiP never adopted unilateralism as a tactic, and many of its members continued to condemn it as a strategy for disarmament in the West.

inspired a special section stating that "the basis of cooperation in the movement between people of different outlooks is tolerance and mutual understanding of different ways leading to solutions of fundamental contemporary problems". In fact, in concrete terms and in the eyes of the public, WiP's activities and agenda became focussed on the joint issues of alternative service and oath refusal. This focus was exemplified by the adoption of Otto Schimek as a symbolic patron of the movement. Schimek was a young Viennese Catholic, conscripted into the Wehrmacht and executed in southern Poland in 1944 for "desertion and cowardice in the face of the enemy". Local legend claimed that, in fact, he had first sheltered Polish partisans and then refused to participate in their execution. His grave was already a shrine, and anniversaries of his death and birthday were commemorated with a mass before the emergence of WiP. For WiP "the significance of this figure extends far beyond the historical limits of the Second World War. The refusal to carry out orders and the following of the dictates of one's own conscience signifies an end to totalitarianism, fascism, communism - to every unacceptable authority".[64] The Machowa declaration was written after an attempt by WiP members to attend a commemorative mass and lay a wreath on Schimek's grave had been broken up by the police.

The attempt to pay public homage to Schimek was an

---

[64] Jaroslaw Dubiel, "The Spirit of Otto Schimek", *Voice of Solidarity,* April 1986.

example of WiP's intention to "find ways of non-violent action effective in the conditions created by Communist totalitarianism".[65] One method, a reflection of the intellectual, oppositional culture from which WiP emerged, was the constant production of a stream of articles, open letters, magazines, and leaflets for local, national and international consumption. This form of illegal activity had a much greater influence and significance than it would have had in the West. The unofficial media was widely read, particularly by young people. WiP was also developing concrete actions. Previously, in protest at Adamkiewicz's continuing detention, members had begun sending back their military ID cards with an accompanying letter stating that "I am taking this action not because I am opposed to military service, of which the aim is the defence of the motherland, but from a decision not to participate in lies and hypocrisy".[66] The response of the authorities to WiP up to this point had been "ignore it and it will go away". Even now, although fines were imposed on those involved, no follow up was taken for refusal to pay. However, more punitive sentences were being imposed on the small but growing number refusing military service altogether: Wojciech Jankowski, a Gdansk school teacher, was sentenced to three and a half years in a maximum security prison. The judge commented that the sentence reflected "the socially damaging nature of the offence", and the fact that "similar

---

[65] *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj*, p. 23.

[66] WiP letter [Wp6].

offences occur with increasing frequency in the area of the court's jurisdiction".[67]

In 1986 the government opted for full scale repression of the movement. This change in tactic was in part no doubt stimulated by WiP's increasing public profile. In February, Piotr Niemczyk and Jacek Czaputowicz were arrested on charges of "having connections with a clandestine or outlawed organisation; . . . spreading false information; . . . "sowing unrest"; and "giving information to interests hostile to Poland": charges which carried penalties of up to five years.[68] This was not an attempt to deter specific actions, but was, through criminalising the group, a determined attack on its existence.

Again the authorities had miscalculated. The arrests provoked an immediate wave of protest both inside and outside the country: women members of WiP began a week-long hunger strike at the church of Podkowna Lesna to publicise the arrests. Prominent members of the opposition signed a petition echoing WiP's demands for a change in the oath,

---

[67] "Peace movement on trial", *Uncensored Poland*, January 1986.

[68] Rachel Adams [Lynne Jones], "Take Not that Hypocritic Oath", *New Statesman*, 4 April 1986. In response to the outcry the charge of spreading false information was almost immediately dropped [WP 19]. But, in July, the charges were upgraded to having "entered into an agreement with a person working for a foreign organisation in order to act to the damage of Polish political interests, and to "organising, joining and leading a criminal organisation", making them vulnerable to ten years imprisonment. They were also excluded, along with a third of political prisoners, from the amnesty of that month. The military prosecutor announced that he had proof that the non-aligned peace movements were financed by the CIA.

alternative service and the freeing of conscientous objectors. Lech Walesa issued a statement in Niemczyk's and Czaputowicz's support. Petitions and letters of protest from peace groups throughout the West poured in.

The combination of the seriousness of the charges and the international attention markedly increased WiP's status and visibility. Niemczyk and Czaputowicz were released in the amnesty of September 1986. The government, anxious for Western aid and the lifting of sanctions, had freed almost all of its political prisoners. However, conscientous objectors (COs), including Jankowski, had not been released. Consequently, eleven WiP members staged a sit down in central Warsaw, in spite of Solidarity's disapproval of such provocative tactics. The WiP COs were released from jail two days later.[69] The government had failed to repress peace activity; instead, it had given WiP a place in the mainstream opposition.

The mainstream opposition at the end of 1986 was actually in a state of some disarray. The amnesty had removed Solidarity's main political demand and made it possible for the leadership to meet openly.[70] WiP had demonstrated that there was more political space than had

---

[69] It should be explained that the majority of COs in Poland were Jehovah's Witnesses and WiP did much to publicise their cause. They were not freed in this amnesty but the government agreed to alternative work in coal mines at the end of 1986.

[70] David Ost provides an excellent summary of this period, and of the confusion within Solidarity on its re-emergence from underground. See: *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics,* pp. 160--169.

been imagined. Moreover, there were changes in the international environment. The beginnings of a rapprochement between Gorbachev and Reagan had changed the domestic situation. However, the ten million-strong trade union movement no longer existed. Arguably "by late 1986, what used to be Solidarity was now a disparate collection of political oppositionists loosely held together by the authority of Lech Walesa". [71] Moreover, many in the Solidarity leadership were now much less interested in trade union work *per se* and much more concerned with systemic political reform. This was a "national goal" that could only be achieved through "high level negotiations". There were few tasks that could be offered to the ordinary supporter.[72] Thus, for most people, while the word Solidarity continued to have a symbolic and mythic function, in concrete terms it meant less and less. Yet if "the opposition had lost much of its influence, it [was] equally true that the authorities [had] not gained any".[73] In this atmosphere of social inertia and disillusion WiP, with its clear concrete goals, its radical and innovatory style of action, openness and easy camaraderie, appeared particularly inspiring to the younger post-Solidarity generation. The movement grew rapidly. By the end of 1986 there were active groups in ten cities. At least one hundred people were

---

[71] Ibid., p. 163.

[72] Ibid., pp. 164--5.

[73] Zbigniew Romaszewski, "Solidarity at the Crossroads", *Kultura,* no. 1-2 (1987).

either refusing the oath or military service, at this point without arrest,[74] while the government appeared to be on the defensive about the issue, using its own media to both accuse the movement of being "traitors to the homeland" and to discuss the feasibility of alternative service.[75]

In addition, the authorities had decided to attack the Schimek legend, not only arresting and beating up demonstrators on the now regular trips to his grave, but also insisting on the Werhmacht version of the story (that stated he was shot merely for desertion, not for refusing to execute partisans). The heroic version was far too threatening to the Polish communist authorities: it set an example of a courageous refusal to carry out orders motivated by deep religious faith, not ideology, and it also undermined the stereotype of "the bad German". The authorities apparently missed not only the irony of having to support their version of events with Wehrmacht documentation, but also the point made by WiP, namely, that, even as "just a deserter", Schimek offered an example. "If there had been more plain deserters from the Wehrmacht war

---

[74] "Conversations in Poland", *END Journal,* March 1987.

[75] *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj,* pp. 12--13. In fact, a form of civil service was available for those "whose physical and psychological predispositions are somehow restricted", and COs might, at the discretion of a local commander, be assigned to it. However, such "civil defence units are uniformed military formations, quartered in barracks and subordinate to the Ministry of Defence". The conscripts were subject to military regulations, had to take an oath and do a training course with arms. Each region had a ceiling on the number of recruits who could do alternative service and it was completely arbitrary as to what happened. There was no appeal.

would have ended earlier".[76]

Meanwhile, the impact of the Chernobyl disaster in April 1986 had pushed the movement to act on its theoretical commitment to ecological issues. WiP were the main organisers of street demonstrations in Wroclaw and Krakow in which over a thousand individuals participated. WiP groups also began to turn their attention to local ecological targets, with some success. Weekly marches and sitdowns in Wroclaw through the winter of 1986/87, in protest at a chrome plant that was polluting the local water supply, resulted not only in police intervention and heavy fines of the participants, but also in a decision by the regional council to close the plant by 1992. Throughout 1987 more environmental campaigns were begun in Poznan, Szczecin and Gdansk, particularly focussing on local nuclear facilities like the planned reactor at Zarnowiec, and the proposal to dump nuclear waste in former German war bunkers in Miedyrzecz.[77]

WiP had also become increasingly active and influential internationally, with a wide network of contacts and support in peace and human rights movements throughout Eastern and Western Europe, the USSR and the USA. It had substantial influence on the debate on the connection between peace and

---

[76] David Warszawski, "Set an Example . . .", in *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj,* pp. 32--35. Also, Jacek Czaputowicz, "Why is the State Afraid?", *WiP Bulletin,* Nov. 1986, trans. Franek Michalski ,in *Across Frontiers,* Spring 1987.

[77] See, for example, Marek Kossakowski, "Leave the Bunkers to the Bats!", in *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj,* pp. 63--66.

human rights and the best way to end the Cold War. Its own view was that not only technical but "political disarmament", that is, "the elimination of the political causes of the arms race" was essential. "Only strong self-organised societies can guarantee the credibility of peace agreements."[78]

Perhaps the highpoint of WiP's international activity was the organisation of an international seminar entitled "Giving Real Life to the Helsinki Accords." The seminar was in many respects a breakthrough. It was the first time an independent seminar of this kind had been held openly in a Soviet bloc country. Around two hundred and fifty representatives from eighteen countries, including a participant from Charter 77 and one from Yugoslavia, spent three days debating peace, human rights, detente, ecology, and non-violence in a Warsaw parish church, coming out at the end with joint statements and programmes for action, and with a much increased understanding and respect. The most remarkable thing was that, in spite of condemnation of the seminar by government spokesperson Jerzy Urban as "a provocation on an international scale", the refusal of visas and admission to some Western activists and most Soviet bloc participants, and the harassment and detention of many WiP members who wanted to attend, nothing else was done and the

---

[78] Konstanty Radziwill, Speech to END Convention, Coventry, July 1987. (Mimeographed.)

seminar proceeded as planned.[79] What is more, participants who joined the May visit to Schimek's grave were for the first time left undisturbed.

WiP's visibility and impact on public conciousness was now at its highest. It had gained the respect of leading members of the opposition, who saw it as "breaking new ground", challenging both society's polocentrism and the government's image of the Western peace movement as a purely anti-American phenomenom.[80] Some argued that it symbolised a new form of independent democratic political activity that was necessary to regenerate society. "It is stated nowhere in stone that political life is to be realised through trade unions".[81] Certainly WiP was having a knock-on effect on other official groups, stimulating them to adopt peace and ecology issues.

It was clear that the government had now accepted WiP's existence as part of the opposition, and was no longer intent on destroying it as a movement. Such action might have undermined the continuing stream of Soviet peace initiatives in this period. Even so, peace activists in the late 1980s in Poland were the most persecuted section of the opposition. Of the twenty-five individuals arrested for political offences since September 1986, fifteen were

---

[79] See Richard Bloom, "Provoking Peace in Poland", *END Journal*, Summer 1987; and Lazarski, "The Polish Independent Peace Movement", pp. 128--9.

[80] Interview with J. Onyszkiewicz, quoted in "Report on Visit to Poland, May 1987", END Polish Working Group.

[81] Author interview with Zbigniew Romaszewski, quoted in personal letter from author to Edward Thompson, May 1987.

imprisoned for refusing military service or the oath. Sentences averaged three years. Treatment was often harsh, as in the case of Slawomir Dutkiewicz, a farmer and concientious objector, who went on hunger strike from the moment of his arrest and who was beaten and force fed until his release ten months later.[82]

Hunger strikes had become a more common tactic among WiP members at this point, both by those imprisoned and by those protesting their arrest. Other new tactics included "roofing", in which a group of protestors would place themselves on a roof of some public building and throw leaflets down, their relative inaccessibility prolonging the action and its impact. Also, like Greenham women, WiP members had by this time learnt to go on the legal offensive. In July 1987 the Supreme Court decided that the security police were obliged to apologise to Jan Maria Rokita for the illegal violation of his freedom, and for battery, during a visit to Schimek's grave that May. It was an unprecedented decision.[83]

Not surprisngly, the combination of high visibility, continuous action and harrassment, and a commitment to a certain spontaneous decentralised movement, was producing internal tensions. The movement's cooperative, unstructured and informal style encouraged an imaginative spontaneity and initiative and made infiltration and subversion difficult,

---

[82] Helsinki Watch, *Violations of the Helsinki Accords, Poland, December 1988: A Supplement* (New York: Helsinki Watch Committee, 1988), pp. 5--9.

[83] *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj,* p. 14.

but it also meant that the media focussed primarily on the most accessible and well known figures. In fact, at this point, with a high profile, a clear commitment to some specific goals and a non-violent form of action - as spelt out in the Machowa declaration - the movement was strong enough to contain internal tensions. There was some grumbling, some personality clashes, but geographical dispersal made it possible for each local group to find its own style and focus, to produce its own journal or magazine, and to shrug its shoulders figuratively at other groups' priorities. On occasion, individuals moved cities to work in a style or on an issue that suited them better.[84]

In the summer of 1988 the government made a major concession: changing the wording of the oath to drop the reference to the Soviet Union and offering some provision for alternative service. The alternative service would be longer than military service, and the conditions were less than ideal, but it was a major victory for the movement: this was the first time a communist government had acknowledged the need for a full provision of alternative service.[85] The concessions were obviously not simply the result of concerted pressure from WiP, although they could not have occured without this. They were part of a slow

---

[84] "Report on Visit to Poland, May 1987", END Polish Working Group. For example, Wroclaw was not particularly happy with Krakow's preoccupation with the war in Afghanistan and strong anti-Sovietism, feeling they "instrumentalised" the peace issue to some extent.

[85] In both the GDR and Poland COs could serve previously in non-weapons carrying units.

shift in the whole political landscape that had been going on for the last year. For a number of reasons the Government and Solidarity were finally moving towards rapprochement.

The government had realised that it could not solve the now desperate economic situation without the cooperation of society, and all attempts to coopt sections of society but exclude Solidarity had failed, as had attempts to force through various reform measures. In May and August 1988 there were two waves of strikes demanding both higher pay and the restoration of Solidarity. At the end of August 1988, Jaruzelski invited the Solidarity leadership to participate in round table meetings with the government, and promised to discuss the relegalisation of Solidarity. On this basis Walesa was able to persuade the shipyard workers to discontinue their strike. After the relegalisation of Solidarity in January 1989, Round Table discussions on the country's future began in February.[86]

None of this would have been possible had it not been for the changes in the Soviet Union. It was undergoing its own economic crisis and Gorbachev seemed increasingly anxious to rid the country of the economic burdens of a costly arms race and extensive empire. The internal reforms of *glasnost* and *perestroika* had been complemented by the 1987 INF treaty, and the beginning of the withdrawal from Afghanistan in April 1988.

The details of the Round Table process - how it brought

---

[86] David Ost, *Solidarity*, pp. 179--186

to power the first non-communist prime minister in August 1989, and how it contributed to the demise of the communism and the changes that occured throughout Eastern Europe - are the subject of numerous other books and articles and will not be dealt with here.[87]

Suffice to say that WiP, having contributed to this transformation, was having to adjust to very different conditions to the ones that produced it. In early 1988 Czaputowicz had argued that WiP would have to reconsider its strategy largely because of its successes, which had occurred in almost every area of action.

> They have stopped arresting those who visit Schimek's grave, the pogrom at Kielce [which Wip had drawn attention to] is now seen as a crime, the problems of Ukrainians and Byelorussian minorities openly discussed, as is the problem of death penalty. There have been no new death sentences and more talk about the desire to abolish it.

And there had been "fundamental changes on Afghanistan and disarmament issues", and local ecological successes.[88] He argued that WiP had two choices: to become more structured, and adopt a broader programme, no longer identified primarily with anti-militarism, or to remain as a spontaneous initiative in its current form - which might prove too constricting for some.

---

[87] See, for example, Timothy Garton Ash, *We The People: The Revolution of '89, Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin* (Cambridge: Granta in association with Penguin, 1990).

[88] "A New Stage: A Conversation with Jacek Czaputowicz", *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj*, pp. 71--74.

It was in the nature of the movement and the times that it should attempt to adopt both courses. For many, WiP proved both too constricting and too undefined. The complete absence of press censorship, and freedom of association, had meant that many new groups and initiatives had emerged dealing with different parts of WiP's pluralist agenda. Some, for example, had initially tried to extend and develop part of WiP's agenda by creating a new sub-group, in October 1988, called Future Times. These were mostly the older generation from NZS, associated with Warsaw and Krakow, whose emphasis had been more oriented to the international scene and wider political questions, and whose energy had gone into discussion and publication more than happenings. Now they saw the process of reform as a chance to take their agenda into the mainstream of political life. Other participants in WiP, particularly the more anarchist, had at best had an ambiguous relationship with Solidarity and at worst open conflict.

Tensions between the groups resulted, in the spring 1989, in the expulsion of Future Times. For the rump of WiP there was a perceptible shift of emphasis away from anti-totalitarianism to a focus on anti-militarist and concrete demands, particularly pertaining to poor pay and conditions, and the arbitrariness of the provision for alternative service.[89] WiP now had to contend with the fact that it was no longer in the frontline of the Polish opposition or in the mainstream of political life. Peace

---

[89] Draft programme of WiP for 1989, [WP 38].

and ecology, even civil rights, had become marginal issues for most people, compared with the harsh economic realities of post-communist life.[90] Moreover, the international network of peace and human rights groups of which WiP had been such an active part was changing. Many of its East European participants were preoccupied with the dramatic changes in their own countries, while the Western peace movement was in decline. The formation of a trade union specifically for conscientious objectors at the end of 1989 took away some of WiP's concrete tasks, leaving a less focussed anti-militarist agenda. By late 1991 it was not possible to identify a countrywide movement anymore, although small pockets of activists, most of them in their teens, continued to act as WiP groups.

WiP had not only put anti-militarism permanently on the Polish agenda, it had played a major role in the democratic transformation of Polish society.

Guatemala: The Runujel Junam Council for Ethnic Communities (CERJ)

Halliday argues that the failure to stabilise the Third World and secure Western interests provided "one of the major spurs for the unleashing of a new Cold War in the West", and accounted for the fact that, contrary to popular

---

[90] Lynne Jones, *States of Change: A Central European Diary* (London: Merlin, 1990), p. 5.

image, the bulk of the military build up was in conventional military forces that could "be used for counter-revolutionary interventions in the Third World".[91]

The tragedy of Guatemala is that, while the Soviet Union never showed any interest in it, its location, firmly in the US backyard, has meant that any challenge to US interests has always been labelled as communist-inspired subversion and firmly put down. The most notable example of this was the CIA-sponsored coup that overthrew the reformist government of Jacopo Arbenz in 1954. This was the beginning of a thirty-five year war in which the United States, for the most part quite overtly, supported a small landholding oligarchy and the armed forces in their refusal to acknowledge the needs and rights of the rest of society. Government in Guatemala was characterised by corrupt military dictatorships of various forms, fraudulent and manipulated elections that excluded all moderate reformers, and a growing militarisation of politics.[92]

There had been widespread political violence from 1954 when Arbenz's supporters were put on death lists. Thousands had fled into exile and hundreds had been assassinated. The emergence of a guerilla movement, and a growing assertiveness among the intellectuals and labour unions in the cities, provided the justification for a new kind of counterinsurgency strategy. Sweeps occurred in which all

---

[91] Halliday, "The Sources of the New Cold War", p. 300.

[92] Susanne Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and U.S. Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

sympathisers were arrested and immediately killed or "disappeared".[93] The objective was to liquidate subversives and intimidate everyone else. Villages that had gone over to the guerillas were razed to the ground. Eight thousand Guatemalans were killed in the military zone of Zacapa in one year.[94]

This counterinsurgency strategy was complemented by increasingly effective terror perpetrated by groups such as MANO Blanca - Movimiento de Accion Nacionalista Organizada (The White Hand - National Movement for Organised Action), "the hand that will eradicate national renegades and traitors to the fatherland".[95] Such groups were allegedly clandestine and beyond official control, but clearly operated out of police and army facilities and were sponsored by the security services to complement counterinsurgency.

"Virtually an entire generation of moderate leaders was removed from Guatemalan political life during the 1960s and 1970s."[96] Jonas also stresses the psychological toll such violence took on the living:

> The population was maintained in a permanent state of fear and uncertainty. The apparently

---

[93] The transitive use of "to disappear" originated in Guatemala.

[94] Michael Mclintock, *The American Connection, Vol.II: State Terror and Popular Resistance in Guatemala* (London: Zed Books, 1985), p. 84.

[95] Ibid., p. 85.

[96] Ibid., p. 62.

> indiscriminate nature of the violence, the steady stream of political assassinations in broad daylight, the tales of torture by the MANO, the blurring of the distinction between official repression and death squad terror, the omnipresence of police bearing machine guns in the streets - all these were the weapons of psychological warfare;

The goal of this warfare was "the permanent demobilisation of the popular classes." Yet the very effectiveness of this campaign prevented those in power from gaining any legitimacy in society.[97]

Yet for the indigenous Maya people who make up the majority of the population in Guatemala, this thirty-five-year war was simply another phase in the "cycles of conquest" that they had been subjected to since the sixteenth century: first by imperial Spain, then by local and international capitalism, and now by state terror.[98] In order to understand the activists engaged in the current wave of popular movements, it is important to realise that their activism grows out of a tradition of resistance that goes back five hundred years, a fact increasingly emphasised by the current actors.

The Spanish conquest, begun in 1524 by Pedro Alvarado, was fiercely resisted by the fragmented political and linguistic groups that occupied this region. The success of the Spaniards was only partly due to military superiority.

---

[97] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala,* p. 164.

[98] George Lovell, "Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala in Historical Perspective", *Latin American Research Review* no. 2 (1988), p. 27.

Their main ally was disease - epidemics of smallpox, measles and mumps - that reduced the Maya population by 90 per cent over the following decades. The Spaniards "concentrated" the scattered highland communities in new villages, introduced various systems of forced labour, and maintained order through terror, including rape, which was one source of the racial intermixing that produced the *ladino* population. Yet there was resistance. It took two forms: direct - local rebellions and escape back to mountain communities - and indirect - "strategic acculturation" that is, the granting of concessions in order to preserve essentials.[99] This was particularly the case in the Tierra Fria, the highlands of the north and west that were of less commercial interest to the Spaniards and therefore suffered less intense repression. "Native people withstood the onslaught of acculturation with more resilience, holding onto their land, retaining many principles of community organisation, and guarding a sense of place that was resolutely their own."[100] It was not that Maya culture was preserved intact but, rather, that the Maya "effectively nurtured a cultural resistance by keeping alive many of their long established traditions". Thus "the emerging society was a creative blend of elements of Hispanic culture . . . mixed with elements of pre-Columbian culture they had

---

[99] Nancy M. Fariss, "Indians in Colonial Yucatan: Three Perspectives", in *Spaniards and Indians in Southeastern Mesoamerica: Essays on the History of Ethnic Relations*, ed. Murdo J. Macleod and Robert Wasserstrom (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 34.

[100] Lovell, "Surviving Conquest", p. 31.

defended and upheld." An example of this capacity for resistance via accommodation was the way Catholic ritual was adopted and made to incorporate Maya traditional beliefs. "This fusion of old and new led to the formation of a culture of refuge and the emergence throughout North-West Guatemala of 'closed corporate peasant communities'."[101]

The second cycle of conquest followed independence from Spain, when the Liberal drive for modernisation, centred around coffee production, resulted in a massive expropriation of native lands and the creation of a migrant labour system that endures to this day. Coffee production organised on a plantation (*finca*) basis requires intensive labour at harvest time only. Initially, this need for labour was ensured by various forms of coercion. Again, resistance to this exploitation was "mostly localised and uncoordinated",[102] but sufficiently disruptive for the then president, President Barrios, to have to adopt the scorched earth and resettlement tactics used by the Guatemalan army a century later.[103] In the post-Second World War period the skewed land distribution and rapid growth of population has made such coercion less necessary. A 1964 census showed that 63 per cent of land was owned by 3 per cent of the population.[104] 90 per cent of peasant farm plots are too small for subsistence needs and therefore the owner must

---

[101] Ibid., p. 32.

[102] Ibid., p. 39.

[103] Ibid., p. 40.

[104] Ibid., p. 42.

migrate in order to survive.

It was the creation of a labour force dependant on both waged labour and subsistence acivities that contributed to the breakdown of the closed corporate communities and the growing politicisation and integration of the Maya into Guatemalan life.

This integration was assisted by other forces, in particular the Catholic Church. Catholic Action was a movement introduced in 1946 to counter native "impurities" and communist subversion.[105] However, the foreign priests invited to lead these reforms found themselves confronting the "brutal" Guatemalan reality of "intense misery and exploitation"[106] and were themselves radicalised. Moreover, the impact of the Second Vatican Council (1962-3), preaching solidarity with the poor and the need to "structure and consolidate the human community according to divine law",[107] affirmed the Church's role in providing a political and economic response to deprivation. Liberation theology became a driving force in highland communities. Catholic Action established small centres with elected officials in

---

[105] Jim Handy, *Gift of the Devil: A History of Guatemala* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), p. 238. At the outset Archbishop Rossell warned that "today [the indigenous population] is a tame and long suffering lamb, but it is very easy to turn it into a cruel wolf, or a ravenous lion, or a poisonous snake". Therefore it was necessary to encourage "Christian resignation" among the poor, and "to awaken the feeling of charity among the rich".

[106] Luisa Frank and Philip Wheaton, *Indian Guatemala: The Path to Liberation* (Washington: EPICA Task Force, 1984), p. 29.

[107] Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, p. 239.

every small canton. Young Maya, trained as catechists, speaking Spanish yet retaining the ingrained communitarian values of Maya social life, rapidly became community leaders, concerned with education and social welfare as much as with religion.

The rise in the influence of Catholic Action was linked with a development boom in which newly established Catholic Action centres were able to encourage the development of cooperatives and the use of fertilisers.[108] More than half of these were located in the Western central highlands, where they were having "major impact on political attitudes".[109] Alongside the growth of literacy, the cooperatives produced profits that could be spent on radios, and listening to these gave many Maya their first introduction to "the concept of Guatemala as a country".[110] Scholarships gave some both university education and a first taste of anti-Indian racism. The purchase of fertilisers meant engagement in a non-subsistence economy and a realisation of the benefits to be gained from participation in the electoral system as well. Local parties reflecting peasant interests, such as the Christian Democrats, began to have some success in local elections.

Unfortunately, the rise of cooperatives, and the growth of Maya self reliance and political awareness coincided with

---

[108] Lovell, "Surviving Conquest", p. 44.

[109] Sheldon Davis and Julie Hodson, *Witnesses to Political Violence in Central America* (Boston: Oxfam America, 1982), p. 14.

[110] Frank and Wheaton, *Indian Guatemala,* p. 32.

a boom in the agri-export business. In the late 1960s and 1970s the need for native labour was growing just at a time when indigenous people were using their wages to create alternatives to seasonal migration.[111] The 1976 earthquake exacerbated the problem in a dramatic way. Twenty-five thousand people were killed, seventy thousand injured and two and a half million were left homeless.[112] The most devastated region was the North-West highlands and, not surprisingly, the people from there preferred to stay at home and reconstruct their lives and communities, gaining an even stronger sense of self sufficiency in the process.

The earthquake also highlighted other political developments that paralleled the changes in the countryside: in particular, a growing degree of articulateness and organisation among students and workers. The 1970s saw the emergence of new trade unions and the growth of strike action. Most threatening of all was the emergence of the Comite de Unidad Campesina (CUC) between 1976 and 1978. This was a national rural peasant organisation led primarily by the Maya but for the first time uniting them with poor *ladinos*. In 1980 they organised a massive strike of 750,000 workers in the cotton and sugar plantations of the south coast. Although the promised wage increase was never implemented and there were severe reprisals against the participants by the landowners, the strike, uniting *ladinos* and indigenous peasants, was the landowners' "worst

---

[111] Lovell, "Surviving Conquest", p. 44.

[112] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala,* p. 95.

nightmare come true".[113]

Given the entrenched interests of the oligarchy, the growing confidence and self organisation of the community could only bring the community into headlong collision with the state. It is not possible to put a finger on the point where the repression intensified or at what moment it could be defined as an all-out war. What is clear is that, through the late 1970s, any significant political or community leadership in the town or country became a target for the death squads, now functioning with complete impunity. In the department of El Quiche, 168 cooperative and village leaders were killed between 1976 and 1978. The villages most brutally attacked were those that had been most successful in gaining some measure of autonomy. The repression was so severe that in 1980 the Jesuits withdrew all their priests from the department citing "a climate of insecurity which prevents any kind of evangelical or pastoral work".[114] In the cities, the targets were students and trade union leaders, reformist politicians and professionals.

Handy argues that it was the removal of all possibilities for reform, through electoral fraud, military control of the ballot box, and violence directed at all its proponents, that forced all those sectors of society that favoured reform into at least rhetorical support for

---

[113] Ibid., p. 129.

[114] Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, p. 243.

revolution.[115]

Most writers identify at least two significant turning points in changing the consciousness of the indigenous population. The first was the massacre at Panzos, when a special unit of the Guatemalan armed forces opened fire on an unarmed crowd of Kekchi Maya, including old people and women and children, peacefully protesting against the permits given by the government to several transnationals for mineral exploration. One hundred people were killed and 300 wounded. The bodies were dumped in mass graves that had been previously dug, suggesting a premeditated act.[116] The fact that the massacre was carried out in broad daylight by the armed forces themselves suggested that the authorities were determined to set an example and "terrorise the entire population into abandoning its demands for social justice".[117] The authorities' attempt failed: massive demonstrations of protest followed in 1978 and 1979.

The second was the attack on the Spanish embassy, in January 1980, when a delegation of peasants from the Ixil areas of the North-West highlands decided to peacefully occupy the embassy in protest at the military repression in their area. In spite of protests from the Spanish ambassador, the police stormed the building and set it on fire, killing thirty-nine people, including a former vice-

---

[115] Ibid., p. 237.

[116] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala,* p. 128.

[117] Ibid., p. 128.

president and foreign minister negotiating with the peasants.[118]

These two events were clearly psychological turning points for the indigenous population, who now felt that it was necessary to take up arms simply as a means of self-defence. The guerilla organisations, quiescent since the 1960s, had not been inactive, but had been slowly building up support among the communities of the North-West highlands. Now, in 1980, thousands of Indians made a transition from passive support to active participation.[119]

However, in spite of early successes between 1980 and early 1982, when large parts of the Western highlands were under their control, the guerillas' offensive failed. This was largely because they failed to prepare for the strength of the counter-offensive launched against them and because they were not well organised enough to support or protect the several hundred thousand Indians who had given them

---

[118] The ambassador and one peasant survived. However, the latter was later kidnapped from his hospital bed and killed. Recent Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigobertu Menchu's father was one of the occupants of the Embassy.

[119] Frank and Wheaton, *Indian Guatemala*, p. 67. The anthropologist Robert Carmack gives a moving account of this process in the hamlet of La Estancia near Quiche, Santa Cruz, where selective assassinations of cooperative and CUC members was followed by a wholesale indiscriminate massacre of fifty people by soldiers, after which forty young people left to join the guerillas and the other thousand inhabitants abandoned their homes and dispersed. See Robert Carmack, "The Story of Santa Cruz Quiche", in *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, ed. Robert Carmack (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), pp. 47--55.

moral and practical support.[120]

The horror and scale of the counter-offensive defies description and belief. Yet understanding it is essential to any understanding of the re-emergence of popular movements in the late 1980s. In the cities repression had intensified since 1978, to the point where, by 1982, any organiser or advocate of structural change was either dead or in exile. However, these killings were to a degree targetted and selective. In the countryside in the early 1980s, being an Indian was synonomous with subversion. One could no longer talk of selective killing. There was a massive generalisation of the campaign in which the army directly attacked the basis of village life.

> The massacres were also destroying in a systematic manner all that sustains life in the community: houses, woods, harvests, to the point that the water in the rivers is polluted to drive the people to desperation. The current wave of terror appears to have as a principle object to disarticulate the social life and cultural inheritance of the Indian people and the peasant, to end the resistance of those that now won't support the weight of centuries of robbery, of maltreatment and of persecution.

Thus wrote the Dutch Catholic Congress, one of the many critical international voices - but to little avail. The

---

[120] Jonas identifies three other reasons for failure: they did not coordinate their efforts sufficiently with the popular movements of the 1970s; they failed to make a successful alliance with the middle classes and moderate opposition; and "divisions and rivalries" among themselves prevented the formation of a common front - the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (UNRG) - until too late. Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, pp. 140--144.

violence escalated to a "Dantesque nightmare of brutality".[121] The logic was to remove the sea from the fish, that is, to deprive the guerillas of any potential support. This required the razing of villages, the burning of crops and bombing of civilians, combined with the perpetration of the most horrifying atrocities.

Survival International provides an eyewitness report of what happened after the arrival of a truckload of soldiers at a village in June 1982:

> They said that all the people in the villages were guerillas, even the women and children. He ran and hid, then watched as the soldiers killed fifteen people, including women, with machetes. They set fire to the houses, and sometimes opened the doors of the huts and threw hand grenades inside. In all fifty people were killed in the village. Two of those killed were his uncles. From a kilometre away, he saw women from his village who were hung by their feet without clothes.[122]

Statistics for this period are uncertain for obvious reasons, but an estimated one million Indians were displaced between 1981 and 1985 as a result of counterinsurgency operations, fleeing either to Mexico, the mountains, or to shanty towns in the cities, where staying alive meant shedding language and dress and becoming *ladino*.[123] This is besides the 100,000 killed and 30,000 disappeared since the

---

[121] Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, p. 251.

[122] Mclintock, *The American Connection*, p. 244.

[123] Lovell, "Surviving Conquest", p. 47.

mid-1970s.[124] Statistics for the department of Chimaltenango in 1983 show what these figures meant in terms of destruction of community: in eleven communities 20 per cent of families were headed by widows; fifteen communities had been abandoned for a year; in others, like Chuabaj Grande, twenty-five out of 240 families remained, fifteen of these headed by widows. "The massacre of the Indians is simply the continuation of the work of the conquest", a wealthy Guatemalan explained to a US reporter. "You finished off the Indians in your country nearly 100 years ago."[125]

Guatemala's international pariah status, combined with the failure of the army to defeat the guerillas, resulted in a coup in March 1982 that installed General Rioss Montt. Rioss Montt was a former Christian Democrat who had been fraudulently defeated in the election of 1974, and a member of the fundamentalist church of the Word, but any hope that he might improve the human rights situation was rapidly dispelled. After a brief amnesty the intensity of repression in the countryside grew worse as Rioss Montt announced: "today we are going to begin a merciless struggle . . . to annihilate the subversives that have not understood the good intentions of the government."[126] He also said: "we have no scorched earth policy, . . . we have a policy of

---

[124] Jean-Marie Simon, *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny*. New York: Norton, 1987, p. 14.

[125] Arthur Allen, *Baltimore Sun*, 1 June 1982.

[126] Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, p. 257.

scorched communists."[127] What was new was that the repression was more effectively combined with a programme of militarisation, pacification and civic action. The programme had two key components.

One was the creation of development poles around strategic hamlets or model villages. Each department was turned into a military zone. Local communities were reinforced with a garrison, and villagers from the surrounding countryside were forced to relocate. Or entirely new villages were constructed to house those refugees brought down by army sweeps in the mountain. In fact the policy was another fundamental attack on the basis of Indian life. The population was unable to tend its traditional lands or farm in the accustomed manner. Villagers in the mountains usually live in dispersed settlements surrounded by their fields; these new communities bore more resemblance to prison camps. Even the army acknowledged that material conditions were appalling but it argued that people were grouped thus for their own security. The sign outside one such community indicated their real role: "Welcome to Saxaroch: an Ideologically New Anti-Subversive Community."[128]

The other key component of Montt's pacification strategy was the creation of "Civil Patrols" (PACs). This entailed the compulsory recruitment of all adult males into

---

[127] Reuters, *New York Times*, 6 December 1982.

[128] Jean Marie Simon, *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny* (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 236.

local civil defence units, under army control. Theoretically, service was demanded from 18- to 60-year olds for approximately twenty-four hours a week. In practice, the age ranged from ten to seventy and could be far more frequent. They were

> required to patrol the streets, roads and hillsides day and night, registering all comings and goings of the population. In heavily patrolled areas and strategic places such as main roads, the patrols must record the names of all arrivals, where they are going, the reasons for their movements and where they have come from. In addition to this intensive surveillance over the boundaries of their communities, they are required to report any suspicious people walking about at night, the language they speak and what they are saying. These reports are delivered to the local military authorities, two officials whose titular responsibilities are *comandante* and *ideas ideologicas*. (Failure to report on strangers can result in summary execution.)[129]

From the army's point of view this was both an ingenious way of providing low cost security and of controlling the population. "Members of the tight knit Indian communities could be collectively held hostage against subversion."[130] It also allowed them to engage in ideological work on a constant basis. From the villagers' point of view it was discriminatory, onerous, unpaid work that took time away from their own fields that they could ill afford and further divided and undermined the community.

Military service was compulsory, requiring all adult

---

[129] Mclintock, *The American Connection*, p. 250.

[130] Ibid., p. 250.

males to do their time and then remain nominally part of the army reserve until fifty. PAC service, however, was selective, concentrating particularly on the Western highlands. Patrollers often found themselves not only obliged to be the army's eyes and ears in the community, but also to do forced labour, such as road building. Exemptions were allowed for migrant workers on the coast, but substitutes had to be found and failure to provide a receipt from the plantation owner could mean summary execution. Thus landowners were given additional control over migrant labour. Patrolling could also be very dangerous. Patrollers were unarmed, except perhaps with dummy weapons, yet were often used as a first line of defence on entering a guerilla area. On other occasions patrols were used as a scapegoat by the army who blamed their own atrocities on PAC excesses. And the patrollers were forced to commit excesses: to kill members of their own community, even family, or be accused of subversion and face death themselves. One report, for example, describes how in Jojabaj in 1983, after a hooded informant had selected suspects, patrols were ordered to execute the four suspects in public:

> The men were struggling and shouting as they were held down. Their heads were yanked back by their hair, then their heads were hacked from their bodies with machetes, the severed heads were presented to the local military commander by the villagers as proof that the execution had been carried out.[131]

---

[131] Gill Brown, The Sunday Times, 20 March 1983.

Such actions obviously created enormous guilt, and fear of reprisals from neighbours bound the individual more tightly to the patrol. Meanwhile, the system of reporting to the army effectively displaced "traditional forms of self-government and order". The ideological message of the army was that "the central identity of an Indian is the fatherland, the central institution of the fatherland is the army, and one is therefore a patroller foremost".[132] At one point the PACs involved one million peasants, a quarter of the adult population. The countryside was transformed "into a police state. It is difficult to overemphasise the extent to which the civil patrol system contributes to a totalitarian control of the civilian population."[133] Refusal to participate meant that one was immediately labelled as a subversive and vulnerable to summary execution: thus terror was sustained. Neutrality in such a situation was impossible. The highland communities were effectively recruited onto the army's side and the guerillas were put on the defensive, retreating to the far north. Even so, this military success did not prevent Rioss Montt being deposed in a coup in August 1983. The new president, Humberto Mejia Victores, offered a way back into the world community by offering a rapid transition to civilian rule and support for US regional policy. The repression

---

[132] Americas Watch, *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities: CERJ* (New York: Americas Watch, 1989), pp. 9--10, quoted in Lynne Jones,"Where Democracy is Fragile", *END Journal*, April-May 1986.

[133] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, p. 150.

continued, though at a lesser intensity than before, and after a newly elected constituent assembly had drafted a new constitution in 1984, the civilian Christian Democrat, Vinicio Cerezo, took office as the first civilian president in twenty years, in January 1986.

It would be quite wrong to see the change to civilian rule as a defeat or transformation of the military. Jonas convincingly argues that Guatemala exemplifies a "counterinsurgency state", that is, one, designed to defend the interests of a monopoly bourgeoisie and the military, including transnational capital. Its objective is not merely to defeat but to annihilate any challenge to its authority. This requires a recourse to state terrorism and "total war". And this military aspect of the counterinsurgency struggle defines all aspects of political life, even in periods of relative peace.

> Because the counterinsurgency state's goal is to control the civilian population and eliminate significant opposition, it makes truly pluralistic politics impossible. . . . Rather than a state of exception from a democratic norm it is a predominantly coercive state, which denies the exercise of individual rights and the autonomous functioning of mass organisations. [And it] does not require military government at all times; in fact, it explicitly proposes the re-establishment of formal democracy after the most intensive military phase of the counterinsurgency campaign. Under certain conditions, civilian regimes can be more effective agents of pacification than military dictatorships. Within the counterinsurgent conception, "democratic" civilian regimes are restricted and controlled, preemptive of social protest movements, and unable to establish civilian hegemony over the armed

forces.[134]

Civilian regimes should be seen as an adjustment of the counterinsurgency strategy, giving international legitimacy and allowing a resumption of aid to deal with the economic crisis.[135]

Certainly Cerezo's election appeared to bear this thesis out. The new constitution "established standard political rights on paper and technically returned Guatemala to the rule of law", but it also "legalised the basic institutions of counterinsurgency" such as the PACs.[136] Although the elections were technically clean, half the electorate was disenfranchised through the exclusion of parties of the left. 55.8 per cent did not participate in spite of the fact that voting was compulsory for those over eighteen.[137] But the clearest indication of continuing military control was the amnesty the army granted itself before relinquishing power, and Cerezo's own acknowledgement, when taking office, that he held only 30 per cent of the power.

Yet there was a limited political opening. At the

---

[134] Ibid., pp. 117--118.

[135] Jonas argues that "in the regional context, the United States was interested in Guatemala as a counter-example to Nicaragua to 'prove' the Jeane Kirkpatrick thesis that right-wing authoritarian regimes pose no threat to democracy because they 'inevitably' evolve toward democracy or 'liberalise'". See *The Battle for Guatemala,* p. 158.

[136] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala,* p. 155.

[137] Ibid., p. 155.

outset Cerezo appeared to have a genuine commitment to reform. He had been very critical of the civil patrols, and stated that he intended communities to be able to vote on their continuing existence. He talked of taxing the larger enterprises, of "law and justice at the service of the people", and of greater control over the military.[138] Popular organisations and human rights groups began to reappear. Most significantly, in rural areas, some communities decided to take seriously a new provision in the Guatemalan constitution, Article 34, that stated "the right of freedom of association is hereby recognised. No individual shall be forced to associate with or form part of groups or associations of self defence or similar organisations."[139] The PACs were now voluntary and in some communities villagers were refusing to patrol. At first this was sporadic, but one community learnt from another. This process was fostered partly by Amilcar Mendez, a rural school teacher in the town of Santa Cruz del Quiche.[140]

---

[138] Author interview with Vinicio Cerezo: "The military . . . made a strategic decision. Now it has to accept the civilian government making decisions or it will have to have a coup and show the world that it is in power. . . . We are not going to have a sham democracy in this country. If I stay in power, it is because I am making decisions. If not, we will be having this discussion in Miami.", quoted in Lynne Jones, "Where Democracy is Fragile", *END Journal*, April-May 1986. Sadly, Cerezo became more preoccupied with maintaining power than reform.

[139] Guatemalan Constitution, in Americas Watch *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities: CERJ* (New York: Americas Watch, 1989), p. 2.

[140] See, for example, Jean Marie Simon, *Guatemala*, p. 171.

Amilcar Mendez's own history follows the tragedy of Guatemala. His father, a local mayor, had supported Arbenz and had consequently been imprisoned twice, avoiding arrest a third time only by escaping into the mountains, and then dying prematurely of ill health. As a young teacher, Mendez had been horrified by the discriminatory treament of the Indians and became determined to engage in human rights work. As a consequence he and his family had been forced into hiding in 1981, and on his return to El Quiche he had been abducted from his school and interrogated and abused. Repeated death threats forced the family to take refuge in Canada in 1987, but they had returned after two months in response to requests from the local community.[141]

Mendez would help the villagers formulate and present their petitions, although these often did not reach their destination. By 1988, 600 individuals had petitioned not to patrol, and resisters had begun to meet informally to coordinate their efforts. Two hundred of them made themselves visible in public for the first time by marching with trade unionists in the traditional May Day parade in 1988. On 31 July, at a crowded meeting in which several hundred participants had squashed into Mendez's garden, the Council of Ethnic Communities "Runujel Junam" was founded. "Runujel Junam" is Quiche for "everyone is equal". The title reflected members desire that the group speak for the

---

[141] Interview with Amilcar Mendez, Santa Cruz de Quiche, March 1990.

Maya Indian majority.[142] The founding declaration stated that CERJ "will monitor and struggle for the defense of the fundamental freedoms and rights of the human being". Mendez was elected president with an executive of seven, all of whom were Maya and two of whom were women.

Growing in confidence, CERJ organised its own march in Guatemala City in August 1988, when it presented the Congressional Commission on Human Rights with a four point petition requesting that: the constitutional right not to patrol be respected; public education about this right be provided; that there be congressional monitoring of the situation; and that ex-patrollers be protected.

The petition was presented in an atmosphere of dignity and restraint, no antagonistic slogans were shouted, and the Commission promised to investigate the threats to ex-patrollers.[143]

In contrast to the highly focussed and concrete demands of the August statement, a more elaborate document, published in November 1988, lays out CERJ short- and long-term goals.

---

[142] Americas Watch, *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities*, p. 15.

[143]It should be explained that both the Congressional Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Procurator were new institutions established, after some debate, at the end of 1987. Specifically, the Human Rights Procurator is mandated to investigate human rights violations, publically report his findings, and initiate court or administrative proceedings where appropriate. The Commission is charged with drafting and enacting laws related to human rights, conducting limited oversight of the enforcement of laws, and maintaining contact with domestic and international human rights groups.

1. Defense of cultural and human rights of Guatemala's different indigenous communities, in order to preserve their identity;

2. Complete respect for and compliance with human rights throughout Guatemala;

3. Meaningful, complete land reform;

4. Complete literacy;

5. Elimination of sub-standard housing;

6. Establishment of an anthropology centre;

7. Establishment of a documentation centre and library for the study and presevation of ethnic culture;

8. Elimination of discrimination and ethnic; predjudice.[144]

Like WiP in Poland and the Greenham women, CERJ saw from the start that the concrete manifestations of militarism that were the immediate object of protest were actually one symptom of more deeply rooted injustice, in their case the exploitation and abuse of ethnic peoples and the complete disregard for human rights. Changing this would mean fundamental political changes, such as land reform.

By March 1989 CERJ had 1,259 delegates and representatives in 192 communities, many of which had completely stopped patrolling. Most of the communities were in the troubled province of Quiche and surrounding departments. Executive meetings took place every two weeks,

---

[144] Americas Watch, *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities: CERJ* (New York: Americas Watch, 1989), p. 15.

with delegates meeting as needed. CERJ had also aquired a small office, containing a single typewriter and a few chairs and a desk.

In contrast to WiP and Greenham, CERJ's campaign is not marked by the invention of innovative non-violent action or the use of civil disobedience. It uses the traditional forms of education, petitioning, and marching. But one should note that the act of existence was itself an enormous and risky challenge to the system, quite apart from the practical difficulties to be surmounted. Attendance at meetings could take one and a half days travel both on foot and public transport, and cost several days wages, thus the groups continuing existence was a tribute to individual commitment. The office had become a drop-in centre not just for those protesting the patrols, but for those with complaints of other human rights abuses and even for domestic and social problems. Petitions against patrolling, denunciations and testimonies of violations such as killings, abductions, death threats and writs of Habeas Corpus would be typed up and signed with a thumb print and sent to the appropriate authorities.

Mendez and his co-workers had also begun a programme of human rights education. This would involve visits to local communities to talk about the concept of human rights, its evolution, applicability to Maya lives, and the country's constitution. The success of this work was demonstrated by the fact that, although the constitution is written in Spanish and the cheapest edition costs 70 cents, most

members of the group that I met had well-marked copies from which they could recite key articles verbatim.

Yet CERJ's success came at just the time when it was becoming clear that the Cerezo presidency had made little difference to the established order. Cerezo's survival of two coup attempts had been at the cost of a number of concessions to the Right. No attempt had been made to limit the activities of right wing terrorists in or out of the security forces; there was no talk of land reform; no new taxes; no dialogue with the guerillas; no relations with socialist countries; no regional policies favourable to the Sadinistas. And the "bureacracy of death"[145] had remained intact. There were more political assassinations in 1987 than in the year before Cerezo took office. The US-based "Council on Hemispheric Affairs" named Guatemala as worst human rights violator in Latin America for 1989 and 1990.[146] Targets of the attacks were political leaders, labour organisers, teachers, students, journalists, and human rights workers. A "messenger system" appeared to have developed in which prominent members of a particular constituency would be targetted until the constituency had been terrorised into inaction.[147]

CERJ, given that it challenged the heart of the army's

---

[145] Allan Nairn and Jean-Marie Simon, "The Bureaucracy of Death", *The New Republic*, 30 June, 1986.

[146] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, p. 163.

[147] Americas Watch, *Messengers of Death: Human Rights in Guatemala, November 1988-February 1990* (New York: Americas Watch, 1990).

counterinsurgency campaign and its ideological control over the rural population, was obviously a target for attack. In September 1988 a CERJ member was shot dead in his home, four more abductions followed that year, and it was only prompt denunciations by CERJ that led to the release of three. In 1989 the pressure became more intense: four more members were abducted by the army from the plantation where they worked, and the army began a disinformation campaign against CERJ in general and Amilcar Mendez in particular. The army accused CERJ of collaboration with the guerillas, showing as "proof" an alleged guerilla defector denouncing Mendez as a guerilla commander - although, when confronted by international human rights groups, the army acknowledged that it had no evidence to support the accusation. Another video showed a wolf in a chicken coop talking about human rights. After persuading the chicks to follow him he eats them.[148] Such films were accompanied by warnings and threats about what would happen if villagers discontinued patrolling or joined CERJ. For example, in Chontala the army commander told villagers that they were free to give up patrolling, but if they did so the army would give them "a permanent rest."[149] In some communities villagers were ordered to kill or capture Mendez if he returned to the area, while Mendez himself received repeated death threats.

---

[148] Lynne Jones, "Murder in Guatemala", *New Left Review* 182 (July/August 1990), p. 57.

[149] Americas Watch, *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities*, p. 33.

Such tactics were not without effect.[150] By March 1990, membership of CERJ was around 10,000 and ninety communities had at least partially ended patrolling, but some of these communities were divided between those determined not to patrol and those too frightened, or with too much to lose if they discontinued. Human rights activists in CERJ and its newly formed sister group, the widow's self help organisation CONAVIGUA, found themselves endangered by both army and patrollers. Thus, for example when CONAVIGUA member Maria Mejia was murdered by two military commissioners in Paraxtut in the spring 1990, patrollers drove the rest of the extended family out of the village, accusing them of subversion. They took refuge in the CERJ office. When the assistant human rights procurator attempted to escort the family back, he too was threatened and barely escaped with his life. The incident highlighted a growing public debate about the patrols. The chief procurator stated they were out of control but, ambiguously, argued that they were not unconstitutional, contrary to CERJ's argument that their existence undermined the constitutional rights of ethnic peoples. The incident also highlighted the powerlessness of the human rights bureaucracy and its lack of coercive power over police and judiciary. The government insisted to the international community that there was no threat, while doing nothing to protect human rights activists at home. The army disingenuously continued to insist that the patrols were

---

[150] Lynne Jones, "Murder in Guatemala", p. 57.

voluntary while the minister of defence, General Gramajo, stated that CERJ was a "facade organisation" whose "objectives are the same as the guerillas'".[151]

The human rights situation continued to deteriorate through 1990 in the run up to the general election. The lower turn out for the 1990 elections showed the general disillusionment most felt with electoral democracy. In four years of Christian Democrat government there had been at least two thousand extrajudicial killings and five hundred kidnappings with only one person brought to trial and not a single conviction.[152] The massacre at Santiago Atitlan, when soldiers had opened fire on 1000 unarmed Indians protesting peacefully outside the military base and killed thirteen people including two children, had resulted in the immediate suspension of US aid. The economic situation had worsened dramatically, growing unemployment and runaway inflation having pushed an unprecedented 87 per cent of the population below the poverty line, while the government's neo-liberal solutions of wage restraints and cuts in social services further polarised the population and increased social ferment.[153]

The election as president of Jorge Serrano Elias in November 1990 did nothing to change the basic situation.

---

[151] Ibid , p. 57.

[152] "Special Report, Guatemala 1986-90: Rocky transition to democracy" *Central America Report* 18 (May 1991). The figures are from the local press. GAM reported 1513 extra-judicial killings for 1990 alone.

[153] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala,* p. 177.

During his first year in office there were more than 1000 human rights violations, including five hundred and fifty extra-judicial killings. Yet, in spite of this unremitting repression, the human rights groups continued to function. New groups emerged and formed a coalition in 1990 with the evocative title of 'Committee of the Damned'. There were also concrete gains. CONAVIGUA, which by this stage was the most widespread and effective organisation in rural areas, had begun to organise public exhumations from clandestine graves. This not only brought some significant psychological comfort to grieving families. Disclosure of the grave sites and proper forensic examination of the remains was also a major challenge to the government's policy of impunity.

CERJ, meanwhile, continued to wrestle with the problem of patrols, which were playing an increasingly divisive role in the communities and whose chief's were themselves increasingly responsible for human rights abuses. Patrollers also continued to be victims, as when ten were killed by guerillas while following army orders to remove a sheet of guerilla slogans hung on a bridge.[154] CERJ also went on the legal offensive by taking the Guatemalan government to court at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights over the failure to arrest two patrol chiefs from Chunima who had first murdered a prominent CERJ member and then two of the three witnesses. This action had actually

---

[154] Americas Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, *Guatemala: Getting Away With Murder* (New York: Americas Watch, 1991), p. 31.

resulted in the requested arrest, the first of its kind, although the outcome of prosecution remains uncertain.

At least four factors can be seen to underly this growing assertiveness and self confidence. One was the increasingly outspoken role of the church facilitated by the appointment of a new archbishop, Prospero Penados del Barrio. Secondly, there was increasing self-awareness of ethnic identity. The significance placed on this by the Maya respondents in my study had markedly increased in the two years from 1990 to 1992 and this, in turn, had increased their self confidence. What had brought this about was the indigenous peoples involvement in, and growing awareness of, themselves as a transcontinental movement in which many groups shared problems and histories and together wielded growing international clout. The holding of the 1991 Continental Encounter in Quetzaltenango, and the public discussion over the "celebration" of the Columbus Centennial, resulted in a "Campaign of 500 Years of Indigenous and Popular Resistance". This had massively increased the visibility of the issue of ethnic rights, nationally and internationally. Within Guatemala a new coordinating group had emerged: "Majawil Q'ij" (the New Awakening), which brought together representatives of indigenous people from all the popular organisations, including CONAVIGUA and CERJ. Its specific aim was to promote the unity of indigenous peoples; to recover their history and develop and nourish their identity, culture and religious beliefs; and to unite in the struggle against

discrimination, oppression and dispossession.

Thirdly, there was the continuing immiseration of the majority of the population. Social welfare statistics for Guatemala, particularly for the indigenous and even more particularly for the Maya of the North West Highlands, read like a litany of despair. For example: the number in extreme poverty, that is, unable to afford a minimum diet has risen from 52 per cent in 1980 to 72 per cent in 1990. (80.2 per cent in the northern rural areas).[155] Guatemala has, compared to the rest of Central America, the worst illiteracy rate; the highest infant mortality rate, at 160 per 1000 for indigenous children; the highest maternal mortality rate; and more than 79 per cent of deaths of children under the age of five are from easily preventable diseases.[156] Thus, according to Jonas, "the power of the economic crisis to regenerate social ferment . . . proved greater than the ability of the counterinsurgency state to repress it."[157]

And, fourthly, there were dramatic changes in the international context. With the ending of the Cold War in Europe, the electoral defeat of the Sadinistas in Nicaragua and, in 1991, a negotiated end to the war in El Salvador, the government's Cold War rhetoric and the military's determined equation of "human rights = communist subversion"

---

[155] "Economic Stabilization: An Illusion Shared by Few", *Central America Report* 18 (November 1991), p. 331.

[156] Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, p. 179.

[157] Ibid., p. 177.

began to look more and more inappropriate as surrounding countries shifted towards more consensual politics. There was growing pressure from the United States on the Guatemalan government to reform (although the United States did not challenge the structural conditions that underlay the problems). There was a growing, if superficial, discussion of the need for peace and human rights. Large posters would assault the eye, at the airport and on public highways, announcing the army's and government's commitment to peace. This rhetoric appears to have acted in a similar way to that of the Polish communist peace offensive in the mid 1980s, putting the government in an ambiguous position when it came to repressing movements that took the rhetoric seriously and had increasing support from international solidarity movements and human rights organisations.

Thus, on January 31 1992, the Committee for the Damned held their own peace and human rights conference, commemorating the Spanish Embassy massacre twelve years before. The published conclusions stated that "only with the inclusion of all of civil society would it be possible for dialogue and negotiation to create an enduring peace", and demanded "an end to impunity", demilitarisation, compensation for the losses caused by the army, restoration of occupied lands, and guarantees of life and freedom of organisation.[158] The ambiguity of the situation, and thus the possibilty for action, could also be detected in the

---

[158] "Conferencia Por la Paz y los Derechos Humanos",Paid advertisement, *El Grafico*, 2 February, 1992.

countryside, with some individual commanders demonstrating a growing respect for CERJ and its leaders while, at the same time, the intensity of the death threats against these same leaders and foreign volunteers increased.

Not surprisingly, the ambiguity and volatility of the situation has increased the stress on CERJ which, like the other movements in this study, seems to be going through a cycle of growth, cohesion and fragmentation, reflecting both the strains of being an informal movement with a pluralist agenda and the pervasive stress caused by permanent terror. The tensions within the leadership are over the use of resources and style of working, as well as the difficult area of ethnicity. However, unlike for WiP or at Greenham, the core issue - that of the PACs - remains unresolved, and this fact still provides a central focus for activity, as does education in human rights. In addition, CERJ has become very active on the related issue of forced recruitment and, with the help of international awards and volunteer staff from abroad, has started a small health clinic and women's cooperative. However, the growth of other groups has meant that some of CERJ's human rights agenda is also tackled by them; because of tensions within CERJ some workers have preferred to use their energy elsewhere. At my last visit, in January 1992, CERJ had had no new elections for its leadership since its inception. Twenty-seven of its members have been killed or disappeared, and the bulk of the workload has fallen on a contracted and increasingly exhausted executive. Yet, even so, the most

striking impressions I had of the activists was of their solidarity, good humour, mutual respect, and enduring commitment. No one showed any signs of giving up their commitment.

Anti-militarism in a Cold War Climate

I have described these three movements at some length in order - as I stated in the introduction - to provide a rich description of the environment in which engagement occurred. What emerges is that, while each movement has a distinct and unique history reflective of the very different cultures in which they were situated, there were continuities which I see as arising, firstly, from a common response to the new Cold War; and, secondly, as a result of the choice of non-violence as a method.

This history should make clear that the Cold War as an ideological confrontation between two superpowers that manifested itself as a dangerous escalation of a nuclear arms race had less meaning to the actors on the ground than other related confrontations: that within blocs, between superpower and client state, and within countries, between government and dissenting population. Mary Kaldor has argued that these latter aspects of the Cold War are the most significant. Her thesis is that far from being in ideological conflict, the "Atlanticism" of the West and the "post Stalinism" of the East were "complementary and

required each other's presence as an external enemy with concomitant high levels of military spending, in order to legitimise domestic agendas."[159] She argued that both halves of Europe were in some senses "occupied" (although in the West this could be seen to be in some respects voluntary and far less repressive in its manifestations), and that the clamp-down on human rights exemplified by martial law in Poland and the new deployments of American missiles in the West had more to do with maintaining the internal cohesion of alliances than with confronting any external threat. Thus, the evolving peace and human rights movements on both sides developed converging agendas and could be seen in some senses as "anti-occupation" movements.[160]

Certainly this thesis could be extended to include Guatemala. There are obvious parallells between Jaruzelski's Poland and the counterinsurgency state. In both cases attempts at social reform over long periods had been seen as challenges to both the ruling elites' hegemony and the client state--superpower relationship, and had met with repression. This was justified in ideologial terms by labelling the reformers as fifth columnists and agents of the opposing superpower. The ruling elites in both countries had attempted to legitimise their positions, and increase economic aid, by formally withdrawing the army from

---

[159] Mary Kaldor, "After the Cold War", in *Europe from Below: An East West Dialogue*, ed. Mary Kaldor (London: Verso, 1990).

[160] Kaldor, "After the Cold War".

politics - by ending martial law in Poland, and by transferring to a civilian president in Guatemala - without any relaxation of military control.

In all cases, including Britain, control has meant an increasing rigidity of the system, a preoccupation with "national security" (exemplified in Britain for example by the banning of trade unions at GCHQ in Cheltenham) and increasing militarisation. This militarisation, whether in the form of new nuclear weapons, an increasingly inflexible military call up, or the creation of civil patrols, has in each case meant a subsequent diminuition in civil liberties. Thus the immediate objects of protest - cruise missiles, the military oath, the PACs - were in some sense artifacts. They provided a focus and an opportunity to mount a challenge to the political culture as a whole, a culture created to a large degree by the Cold War.

Some of the major differences in the timing of the emergence of these groups, and in the form in which they emerged, resulted from the different degree to which each of these societies used fear as a means of control. Thus, for Greenham women, functioning in a liberal democracy in which government action is to some degree limited by public opinion and the law, fear of a threatened event - nuclear destruction - was initially mobilising. Action brought women into conflict with the coercive powers of the state, which were certainly intimidating for some but not to the degree that action ceased. On the contrary, women's creative responses to repressive measures, when given

publicity, actually encouraged the growth of the movement. In contrast the governments in Poland, and to an even greater degree in Guatemala, made deliberate use of terror to demobilise popular protest. An attempt to create WiP in the first year of martial law would not have succeeded. Nor could CERJ have survived in the pre-Cerezo years. It was the opening of some political space that gave some individuals the confidence to test and extend the limits of the space. And, in a sense, the fear created by repression, symbolised by forced recruitment onto the oppressors' side, became the object of protest. All three movements could be seen as taking action against fear.

The nature and extent of repression also affected the form of non-violence and structure of organisation. Both WiP and Greenham dealt with states in which the legal apparatus functioned and could be used by protestors and government alike. Both groups used civil disobedience and made skillful propagandistic use of the sanctions applied. Moreover their open, informal, leaderless, and structureless form not only challenged what both groups perceived as the rigid authoritarianism of the state, it also protected the movement from both state-sponsored subversion and from destruction by targeted arrests. The greater formality of CERJ may well reflect the importance of hierarchy in Maya social life, but one should also note that it emerged in a political environment in which one overriding feature appears to have been the absence of the rule of law, with army and death squads free to institute terror at random,

indiscriminately, and with impunity. Thus, the creation of a formal, structured, and accountable organisation answered both a political and psychological need. Both local magistrates and the president of the Supreme Court informed me that they had no control over the military.[161] In this atmosphere civil disobedience would have been extremely risky and meaningless. The movement was committed to demonstrating that it was not subversive and used constitutional means to push the government to uphold its own constitution.

For all three movements the theme of occupation had a double meaning. Certainly both WiP and Greenham referred to the issues of national sovereignty and democratic control. WiP, particularly, was concerned with the role of the Soviet Union, while Greenham did much to highlight the United States's military presence in Britain. CERJ activists are well aware of the role of the United States in their country's development. All the groups, however, perceived themselves as occupied in another sense: by structures within their own countries. As Polish youth with no belief in, or opportunities for, a satisfying career in an ideologically and economically bankrupt state; as women in a patriarchal, Thatcherite, Britain; and as Maya Indians impoverished, exploited and denied their own land: all three groups drew on a constituency of alienated outsiders with nothing or little to lose from challenging the status quo,

---

[161] Author interviews conducted with local magistrates and judiciary, 1990.

and with greater freedom of action and a greater sensitivity to the issues connected to militarism.

The outsider role also contributed to the way in which all three groups were able to stand outside the bipolar logic of the Cold War. This distinguished them from some other opposition movements within their own countries, both antecedent and contemporary. The revolutionary left in Guatemala, which had led the guerilla wars of the 1960s and early 1980s, was not sponsored by the Soviet Union but was socialist in orientation and had initially insisted on a hegemonic role in challenging the state. Popular movements like CERJ have never taken an ideological position and have insisted on their autonomy from the guerilla movement even where there is a convergence of goals.[162] Solidarity, while clearly autonomous itself, accepted the bipolar view of the world that argued that Western peace movements and Central American revolutions, because they were praised by communist propaganda, must be bad, while nuclear weapons that challenged the Soviet Union were good. WiP challenged this "alignment" by both supporting Western peace initiatives and challenging the Soviet Union, opposing US intervention in Nicaragua and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Greenham Women similarly supported Soviet and East European independent peace activists and were heavily criticised by

---

[162] See Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, pp. 135--144 and pp. 189--193.

some sections of the British peace movement for doing so.[163] The combination of nonalignment and a non-ideological agenda that emphasised issues with a transnational meaning actually helped to foster the international connections that played a vital role in all the groups' development and support when under pressure. All of these groups played to a wider audience than their own countries, and this increased the sense of working in a common political culture.

The movement histories show that there is a remarkable similarity in the lifecycles of Greenham and WiP. And it would appear that the development of CERJ is following a similar pattern, although it is too early to be sure. This cycle appears to have three distinct stages: firstly, the organic development of the group around a single issue by a small "friendship circle." By friendship circle I mean people geographically contiguous like the Welsh women, or villagers around Santa Cruz del Quiche, or personally connected like the former NZS members in WiP. What follows is a period of exponential growth, fostered by imaginative actions, a degree of repression and attendant publicity, the development of a pluralist agenda, the formation of international connections, and increasing visibility and repression, which in itself contributes to further

---

[163] For example, in 1984 Greenham women occupied the Soviet embassy in London in protest at the arrest and trial in Moasow of peace campaigner Olga Medvedkova. Their refusal to align themselves with communist government resulted in the refusal of visas and deportations from Soviet bloc countries. I was refused entry to Hungary and East Germany and deported from Czechoslovakia for peace activities carried out with independent activists in those countries.

visibility and growth. The combination of growth, a complex agenda, and repression creates tensions within the group. However, internal cohesion remains while the central issue remains unresolved. If there is some success in achieving the main goal, as with WiP and Greenham, the group fragments around the different aspects of the agenda. The importance of this cycle of organic growth, cohesion and fragmentation is that it demonstrates that social movements are not static, they are both created by and determine the engagement of the individual actors themselves, who bring to and develop their own agendas within the context of the group. The cycle is part of the dynamic interactive environment in which engagement occurs.

Finally, all three groups practised what I describe as the 'politics of connection'. That is, a politics that sees relationships as central to its agenda. The deliberate use of the term connection - drawing on Gilligan's and Lyons's work described above - does not mean to imply that these are primarily "care focussed" movements. It should be clear from the above descriptions that the moral concerns of all three movements are with issues of justice and care, with both challenging oppression and preventing harm, and that while the emphasis may change over time there is an observable trend towards integration of these concerns. Indeed, from the outset, the issues that functioned as triggers for the emergence of the movements - such as a change in the courts' treatment of oath refusers, the refusal to uphold a new constitutional guarantee, or the

introduction of a new weapon system - symbolised in a powerful way both the central themes that preoccupied these groups: occupation and control versus self determination and autonomy, and annihilation versus survival, the threat of annihilation being to conscience, dignity, culture, community and life itself.

The pluralist agenda that emerged in each case could be defined as anti-political. Here I am using David Ost's definition of anti-politics as "not the negation of politics, but a relocation of the political public from state to society." [164] Thus, these movements were concerned not with control of the means of production but with the social and cultural issues of militarism, ecology, human rights, gender, and ethnicity. These were issues that had a determining effect on the degree of control one had over, and the quality of, everyday life in both the personal and public spheres. This was a break with the movements of the past, notably of the 1930s in Britain and the 1960s throughout the world. Understanding this marked difference in political context may help to explain differences in the nature of engagement and activism between the activists in my study and those of others described above in the literature review.

I would argue that a significant aspect of such anti-political politics is a perception of the interconnection between issues, and concern with damage to social relationships. Thus, for example, CERJ challenged

---

[164] Ost, *Solidarity*, p. 16

the PACs because they threatened indigenous culture and usurped traditional structures of authority. They imposed a

> new bureaucracy, totally vertical and militarised and controlled by one individual, something never seen in indigenous communities, nor followed in ancient times. . . . The communities are divided, subject to psychological terror, and there is a militarisation of civil life that clashes with ethnic values.[165]

Greenham women saw the presence of nuclear weapons as the most dangerous manifestation of the damage done to social relationships, particularly gender relationships, by patriarchy; and WiP contrasts the destructiveness of the army with the social and communal values exemplified by Solidarity and the Catholic Church.

In contrast, all three groups see the types of relationships fostered within their movements as, at their best, prefiguring and exemplifying the kind of relationships they would like to see in society at large: non-hierarchical and informal, collaborative, supportive, and encouraging of creativity. Good relationships were in all cases initially facilitated by the fact that all three groups grew organically from friendship circles. This internal cohesion, and the enjoyment individuals drew from working with each other, was one of the main features to attract others. In addition, relationships between the movements and the other individuals and groups within the national and

---

[165] CERJ statement, November 1990. Personal files of author.

international community was essential to all three movements' survival. Not only did the dialogue between movements help to develop their agendas, but such solidarity played a vital role in publicising and limiting repression.

Rapid growth created difficulties for all three groups. Individuals found themselves sometimes having to make choices between issue and community or between internal and external relationships. And for many the breakdown of relationships caused as much concern as conflict over substantive issues.

Finally, non-violence as practised by all three movements is primarily an act of communication with the opponent. All three movements aimed not for the revolutionary overthrow of the state but its radical transformation through relationship. Both rhetoric and action focus not on exclusion and destruction but on the need for inclusion. This does not mean that there are not powerful expressions of anger and demands for justice, but these are seen as a necessary basis for healing.

Thus, CERJ argue that real peace and human rights can only be reached when the government respects the social, economic, civil and cultural rights of the people. "If the government was able achieve this it is logical that it would earn the loyalty of the people, and not the rejection and repudiation that grows each day."[166] And they ask, "How can a national consensus be achieved without our participation?

---

[166] CERJ statement to the Conference on Peace and Human Rights, 30 January 1992. Personal Files of author.

. . . How is it possible to exclude those who for centuries have been victims of the most monstrous repression?"[167] Diana, one of my Greenham respondents, talks about non-violent incursions into the missile base as *a point of communication as well for me. It's a way of saying "look, here I am, think about it, talk to me, let's argue about it".* WiP member Magda explains that *the communist regime tried to disintegrate the society,* and that WiP's political activity was to try *to integrate people with some kind of social world,* that is, to rebuild social relationships.

What is impressive is that, in each case, through the use of non-clandestine, non-violent methods, each movement was able to extend the available political space, fostering the engagement of individuals who had not previously been engaged in any form of political action, and demonstrating the possibility within each culture of new forms of political organisation and activity that laid the foundations for other groups and initiatives, and, in Poland at least, for the transformation of the state itself.

In this chapter I have focussed on the movement as a unit in order to highlight its role in fostering engagement, and in order to detail the political and cultural context from which it emerged. Keeping this context in mind I will now turn to the individual process of engagement in all its diversity and complexity.

---

[167] "The First 90 Days of Government: The Crisis, the Social Pact, and Total Peace": CERJ briefing on first three months of Serrano government, 15 April 1991. Personal Files of author.

CHAPTER 6

"IF NOT US, WHO?": FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

My interest in this chapter is to explore the lives of activists prior to their involvement in collective action. The overwhelming impression from the literature on family background is that activists are especially influenced by parental values and do not act in direct contradiction to their parents' political outlook. Coherent childrearing practises - that encourage self expression and independence - combined with early maturity and responsibility may also be important. Secure and affectionate families with an extensive attitude to the outside world seem more likely to produce empathic, pro-social behaviour.

I was interested to find out if my cross-cultural sample confirmed these findings. Given that the concept of childhood itself differs markedly from culture to culture, and that for some engagement came long after childhood was over, I expected a more diverse picture. I also wondered if one could distinguish a moral orientation. What follows are summaries of twelve respondents' lives before engagement.

Britain: The Greenham Women

Mary was born in 1934, the second youngest of four children. She describes her family as *ordinary working class.*[1] They voted Labour but were not political people and politics was not particularly discussed at home. Nor were they religious. Mary sees some of their values and attitudes to other people as influencing her own.

> *Their attitude was, if you couldn't say anything nice about somebody, you shouldn't say anything, If you couldn't help somebody then you know that was a bad thing, and if you did help somebody you shouldn't necessarily expect them to repay you because they might help somebody else, so it was a sort of a spiral thing.*

Like her they did not regard material things as the main priority. *If there was a threat of an earthquake they would have grabbed the cat or something and dashed off.*

Father was, because of his own harsh treatment in childhood, *if anything, too easy on us.* Mary's memories of him are *unimportant* and not of any particular fondness. *He was there.* Although one conversation sticks in her mind. He said *you should respect your parents,* to which she responded *you should only respect people if they earn respect, regardless of who they were.* He had laughed *because I think he probably agreed.* Mother was important, but the great influence was Mary's maternal grandmother who

---

[1] All quotations from my respondents' transcripts are written in italics without quotation marks.

was quite irrepressible, a larger than life character, who, in spite of her repressive treatment of Mary's mother as a child, both spoilt and encouraged Mary to stick up for herself. Mary does not romanticise her. The picture conveyed is of a manipulative, intolerant and feisty old woman who did not suffer fools gladly but who would not, for example, be intimidated or inconvenienced by the Blitz, defying air raid wardens to shop for tea and refusing to sleep anywhere but her own bed because *that upstart Hitler is not getting me to behave like a mole. She felt that if she acknowledged it, Hitler would have won.*

Home life was *argumentative* and *nice. [. . .] It was a very easy growing-up process, there was no real distress, just very ordinary times. . . . You got the odd wallop when you deserved it, but, again, you knew that you had that coming.*[2] Too young to be frightened by the war, she found it fascinating.

School, on the other hand, was extremely dull, and Mary, although not actively rebellious, simply took no part. The only thing that kept her there was the hockey that she enjoyed and a tight group of friends

> *that I went up to Primary School with; [it] was a really motley assortment - one friend who was Jewish, one who was Roman Catholic, one who was an evangelical type, and they were all totally opposed to their families' religions, so it was sort of . . . we were a sort of rebellious group, but me having nothing to rebel against because my*

---

[2] In the interviews with, and statements by, repondents ". . . " indicates a hesitation; "[. . .]" indicates editing by the author.

family weren't religious.

She left at 16 without any qualifications and worked in offices and shops until old enough to apply for nursing school, which she had set her heart on since the age of six. At that time she had had scarlet fever and spent a long time in an isolation ward with little contact with her parents and *there was just one night sister who made life so tolerable, that I knew that that was what I would like to do.* Undaunted by Matron, who said it was impossible to apply without qualifications, she argued that it was not right to stop someone doing what they wanted and, after persuading Matron to set her some personal exams, obtained a place. After training she chose midwifery, which offered her independence, a chance to work practically with women, which she enjoyed, and exposure to some of the harsher realities of life: *the poverty in which people lived really shocked me.* Working in a naval town with both officers and ratings' wives also exposed her to the real inequities of class: *there was definitely two sets of rules. And the practical application of it was horrifying; because the women are the losers, all the way down the line, and in the lower income brackets the women lose hand over fist.*

The shockingness did not push her into political engagement. Never a joiner, actions for her at this stage of her life consisted of individual initiative *as and when problems landed on my doorstep,* and a refusal to bow to authority for its own sake or to allow anyone to break her

spirit. This might mean a refusal to use a cheap and unpleasant dressing on patients bedsores because *I thought, well, I wouldn't have that foul commodity near me, so I wouldn't use it on somebody else,* or catheterising a male patient in distress, while working as a nurse in South Africa. This confrontation cost her her job and meant she had to leave the country as she was aware that the ward sister considered her a communist. *I was not a communist because I didn't have the dedication to belong to any political party, it was far too great a commitment.* She was also aware that *I was not comfortable to work with. And I didn't like most of the people that I worked with, because they tolerated things they shouldn't have tolerated. You know, they wouldn't stand up and demand, or put pressure on to bring about change.*

At twenty-five she married Robert, an engineer whom she liked. *He was so different from all the rest* because he talked politics, which she found *interesting and absorbing. [. . .] I wasn't interested in who was getting the latest this or the newest that, you know it always left me absolutely cold.* Yet her husband's socialism and engagement in the trade union movement and Labour party did not touch her personally. She belonged, as he did, to CND, but was not active. The next few years were taken up with the birth and upbringing of five children, district nursing, which combined more easily with family responsibilities than midwifery, and a move to Wales to live in a better environment. It was not until her late thirties that her

concept of herself as an apolitical non-joiner was to undergo a marked change.

Margaret was born in 1939 in Italy. Her parents were German-Jewish refugees, and her father was interned as an enemy alien in the early part of the war. Her mother managed the next few years alone. Margaret's memories are of almost dying of bronchitis in dark lodgings, and of regularly being taken to *a dark building [the air raid shelter] and put in this dark bed, high up on the wall where I couldn't get down,* something that has left her with an enduring feeling of discomfort in confined spaces. Her father was released from internment to work on munitions and they moved to London.

Margaret describes her parents as *good parents, and loving,* providing *attention* and *stability and security* in the face of considerable upheaval. Her father was an intellectual man who valued *truthfulness, integrity, culture and learning,* and who felt that *standing on your own feet and being independent* was important. Her mother *lived in the way I used to live before Greenham: according to other people's expectations of her,* with a *very strong sense of duty.* She deferred absolutely to her husband's opinions.

They had become Quakers and the whole family attended Meeting regularly. Margaret remembers vividly her first experience of feeling drawn into the Meeting, when someone stood up and spoke the words that were in her mind. *I knew that something was happening there. That's what reassured*

me that they weren't all just asleep. However, her father, *a Tory* and never a pacifist, *had little time for left wing-type Quaker activities.* Margaret also describes having a *spiritual experience* at the age of nine. She was walking under a railway bridge when the train went by on top and she had a sudden view of herself from the perspective of its passengers:

> *a little girl walking along a road, under a bridge. It was the first time I'd actually seen other people as separate human beings that didn't happen to revolve around me. It was like a god's-eye view of me and the other people in the train.*

This was accompanied by the realisation that the world didn't revolve around her. Margaret told this incident to me twice during our interviews, seeing it as marking out the sense of distance she has always had from herself.

In spite of the stability of home, school was a stressful experience. Margaret had spoken German with her sister until the age of four. She had already discovered in primary school that *part of what I was wasn't acceptable.* In secondary school she found it hard to make friends and became increasingly shy and withdrawn. She learnt to avoid *like the plague having any German connections. I knew there was something wrong with me.* Uncertain what was acceptable and what might result in her being laughed at - even being a Quaker seemed questionable - she learnt to cope by waiting to see what was expected. Her shyness and lack of confidence were compounded by her father's dominance at

home. Margaret was *very bright* and top of the class in most subjects, and *he bossed me around and he wanted to direct my educational career.*

Escape from the conflict between home and school was provided by a close friendship with another girl, who had a *great sense of adventure.* Together they used every moment of spare time to explore London on their bikes and, as they got older, they joined the Youth Hostel Association together. Pushed by father and her headmaster in academic work that she found *exhausting and uninteresting,* the solution again was not confrontation - *we avoided conflict in our family, it was not Quakerly* - but escape, first through biking with friends and folk-dancing, then, at the age of twenty-one, through marriage to her boyfriend Ed.

Margaret is clear that while Ed's capacity to stand up to her father was part of the attraction, it was a good relationship in its own right. She kept her job for the first four years of marriage to pay off their mortgage, then started a family. She was delighted to drop work just as she had been glad to drop university. Her main interest now was her children and growing vegetables, a skill she had acquired from her husband, and which led to the decision to buy a house with an extensive piece of land near Newbury. Politics through the 1960s and early 1970s played no part in their lives, Margaret's group involvements being confined to the Quakers, a mother's group and the Women's Institute.

Diana was born in 1969 in the Midlands. Her father was a

Liberal, probably a closet Tory, and her mother a Labour party supporter and member of CND, but no-one was overtly political, nor was politics particularly discussed at home. In spite of this, Diana's political engagement began at the age of ten when she organised a petition against seal-culling; followed by joining national CND at eleven and starting a school CND group at twelve.

Resilience, self-sufficiency and maturity developed early in a childhood marked by a number of comings and goings. Her parents split up when she was one, and Diana, her elder sister and her father lived with her aunt and uncle until she was four, when her father married again. When Diana was eleven, her stepmother left to marry someone else. Not surprisingly, therefore, the dominant person in her childhood was her father, a mechanic with *a passion for motorbikes, and hill walking.* A stubborn man, he had a *terrible sense of humour* and a *terrible temper* which, on occasion, she found frightening. Rarely, tellings-off would be accompanied by spanking, which she found excessive: *there was absolutely no need for it to be done, because by the time he finished telling me off, that was enough.* But on the whole they appear to have had an affectionate, if argumentative, relationship. Nor was he neglectful, having given up his job to look after his daughters when his second wife left, although Diana said she would prefer to have fended for herself. *I was a very independent child. I used to go out on my own, I liked being on my own.*

Diana describes her mother as *creative, happy*, and as

working too hard, too much of a perfectionist. She married again, and Diana saw her every weekend and did not apparently have any resentment at her departure. By her early teens the household was just Diana and her father, each *doing our own thing,* but she did not miss being in a larger, more closely-knit family: *I had enough friends with large families to appreciate that when I saw it but also appreciate what I'd got, [which] was a family I cared about.*

Another important figure was Diana's great grandmother: *a very strong and stroppy little woman who had been widowed young and didn't hang on to social niceties,* but who *was straight to the point even if it shocked you slightly.* She died when Diana was fourteen, a painful death that left Diana with a sense of loss.

Junior school was not particularly happy. She remembers being jeered for being a cry-baby when her stepmother left her father and locking herself in the toilets. She also remembers joining in the minor bullying of another child and finding the experience so *horrible* that she never wanted to repeat it. Another incident that stands out is refusing to leave the football pitch at the age of nine because she did not see why girls could not be allowed to play. *I didn't see good reason for being excluded.* She had no idea of the wider implications at the time, *but I knew it was definitely a girl--boy thing.* After being sent to the headmaster she was allowed to play.

In fact, Diana, although argumentative and with *a strong sense of right and wrong,* does not come across as the

conventional rebel. Her challenges were always *very polite. [. . .] I think I was a little pious really, a goody- goody, people were complaining I was too well behaved.* Early ambitions ranged from being a nurse to being a policewoman, because *if you wanted to help the community, and stop wicked people doing wicked things, then join the police force.*

Nevertheless, her last form teacher, right wing and vitriolic, had already marked her out as someone likely to *come to no good,* particularly as Diana had chosen to go to a progressive secondary school where one *didn't wear uniforms, and you called teachers by their first names.* Senior school also meant being with a much larger group of children from a variety of backgounds: *suddenly, I was finding that there were more like me.*

Anna was born in 1963, into a working class family in Huddersfield. Her father was a factory worker. She describes him as *incredibly violent, abusive, a heavy drinker,* someone of whom she was *absolutely petrified. [. . .] He would just, like, hit me on the back of the head, I just felt sometimes he was going to kill me.* Her housewife mother was, at that time, an *emotional wreck, [. . .] totally dependent* on her older brother and herself, to the point that she rarely let the children go to school. She read to the children, however, and Anna was bright, teaching herself to read and write at an early age and *devour[ing] every book I could get my hands on.*

They had few friends: the family did not socialize. After Anna's birth, her mother refused to have intercourse with Anna's father. Anna slept between her parents and was persistently sexually abused by her father. As a consequence she was *totally out of control: when they did get me into school I'd fight, or run away, I'd steal if I could.* The misery, terror and insecurity of these early years can be illustrated by the fact that she could not volunteer a single happy memory. She later remarked that the nights that her father was out late and she was alone in bed with her mother, thinking he wasn't going to return, were *incredibly happy.* She also describes having an *unnatural fear of dying* as a very small child. *I used to, like, just burst into tears thinking about it. And I remember when it rained really heavily, I used to cry. I used to think that we're going to be flooded and we're all going to die.*

The fear, however, has always been acompanied by a *strong instinct for survival* and, as she got older, she kept running away. Such behaviour required some courage, as she was quite unable to articulate what the problems were. So, when picked up by the police, in spite of pleas to the contrary, she would invariably be returned home to more punishment. This pattern continued until the age of twelve when she allowed herself to be arrested and charged for something she had not done and as a consequence was put into care. Just before leaving home her father raped her, resulting in pregnancy and a miscarriage while in care, but

no one considered sexual abuse.

The period in care was a mixed one. On the one hand, Anna describes herself, as before, as *out of control,* slashing her wrists, running away, refusing school and getting into physical fights. On the other, she was able to form warm relationships with staff, two of whom became parent figures. One of her key workers was an active trade unionist and began discussing politics with her. She got involved in creating a movement for the rights of children in care: giving them access to their records and case conference reports and greater say in how they were treated. The movement continues to this day, partially staffed and run by the children themselves, and Anna sees their success in setting it up as very important: *I think that was when it started for me. I think it was unstoppable from then.*

In many ways the backgrounds of these four women could not be more different, and the age at which they became politically engaged varies widely. For the older women, family background and upbringing is only one of a number of influences. With Mary, for example, it is nursing and her husband's politics that give her a political awareness; but this does not push her into action. Both older women also have the experience of mothering. Yet some common themes emerge: all are clearly intelligent. As expected, it is in values rather than politics that three of the women see family influence. However, although all three feel affection for their families, there is also sense of separateness: in Margaret's case fostered by a need to keep

a German identity hidden at school, and in Diana as a way of coping with frequent changes. Anna's traumatic experience is the exception and it is the staff of the children's home who become her family. What is striking is that all the women, in quite different contexts, find ways to to assert their independence in some way. Grandmothers provide models for two, while Margaret finds peer support, and Anna depends on her own instinct to survive and escape an intolerable situation.

One can identify the voices of both justice and care in these narratives. In Mary's case there are clearly both from an early age. Her desire to do nursing emerges in reponse to the care she herself is given, while the themes of reciprocity and equality recur throughout - in the dialogue with her father on respect, and in her concern for and treatment of her patients, who get the treatment she would want for herself. Diana, similarly, is both concerned over seals and wants fair treatment on the football pitch. The strength of feeling is enough to push her into action at an early age. Not surprisingly, the dominant voice for Anna is for equality and autonomy in the face of oppression, and it is empathic anger that motivates her first engagement. In Margaret's case, morality is grounded in Quaker faith and there are two "spiritual experiences": one of connection in the Quaker meeting, and a distinctive one of realising that self and other are separate and that she is part of but not central to the world.

Guatemala: CERJ and CONAVIGUA

Christina, born in 1958, is the oldest of six children. Her parents are peasant farmers, apolitical people whose main goal was to get enough from subsistence farming to avoid the yearly migration to the coast. She describes her father as a very *humble and simple, passive, not an aggressive or rebellious* man, who could not read, write or speak Spanish. He was strict with her, however, as was her mother. Both used corporal punishment, which upset her so much that at times she contemplated running away, although she felt it taught her to behave properly. Unlike many of their contemporaries, her father drank little and her parents got on well. In spite of hardships she remembers her childhood as happy. Both parents were Catholics and she was brought up as one.

Her mother was sick shortly after her birth and unable to feed her properly and Christina almost died. When she was eight, the family started to go regularly to the coast to work on the plantations, where, from the start, she picked coffee and cotton for more than eight hours a day. She remembers that time as one of almost constant illness from the poor diet and constant work in *rain and fierce sun.* Moreover, they would often be cheated and underpaid for the work. Even so *when one's very little one's mind is [on] having fun, in the countryside, it didn't matter what kind of work there was.*

The family stopped going to the coast when she was

fourteen, and Christina was finally able to achieve her ambition to go to school full time. She had begged and bullied her parents to allow her to go from the age of twelve. They had not been very keen. Her father felt that *school wasn't important for girls* - both brothers had gone - and she had had to leave whenever the family migrated. However, the parish priest persuaded her father to allow Christina to go to the convent school in the nearby town; the parish would pay half the fees.

The first year was very difficult. She was older than her classmates, she was beaten by the teacher, and laughed at by pupils. She thought of leaving, but *I took the decision myself to struggle on with my studies.* In the second year, having begun to understand Spanish and make friends, things improved. She also had a teacher who *didn't have an aggressive personality. She didn't hit people,* instead she was encouraging and supportive. Christina finished the sixth grade of primary school in 1974. She also had what now seems to her the embarassing experience of being elected "Queen of Quiche" in a *ladino*-organised indigenous festival. She feels she was exploited but remembers with pride that she quoted in Maya from the Popol Vuh[3] in her speech, saying: *"we all rise up and no one gets left behind." So that these festivals for me were in a way representations that our culture wasn't dying.*

---

[3] *The Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya*. English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley from the translation of Adrian Recinos. (Norman and London: Oklahoma Press, 1950).

After leaving school, she did the first part of a health promoter's course, but then dropped out because she did not feel ready for the responsibility. She got a job as a domestic in a convent school in Guatemala City. She loved being in the city, the most frightening experience being the earthquake of 1976, when she spent two days treking home, expecting to find her family dead, but they were all alive. For the next five years she worked in a series of domestic jobs, as a nanny, and a nursing auxiliary, and also managing to save enough for night school. But by 1980 "La Violencia"[4] had started. There were bombings and bus burnings and the schools closed. Moreover, she did not have the finances for the professional teacher-training which she wanted to do.

Christina was advised by her friends to stay in the relative safety of the city during the worst of "La Violencia". She was frightened most of the time, worrying about her family and dreaming that they were bombed by helicopters. Something she later discovered was not too far from the truth: her family had been terrorised out of their village and had camped for months, half starving, in another community. Neither she nor they were politically engaged or had any contact with the guerillas. Both her brother and youngest sister became mentally ill at this time. In 1985 she came home, and after a year found a job with an agricultural cooperative, becoming the main breadwinner in

---

[4] "La Violencia" (The Violence) is how most indigenous Guatemalans refer to the period of war in the early 1980s.

her family.

Francisco was born in 1968 and is the eldest of five children. He describes his peasant cultivator family as *good* and *loving*. This in spite of the fact that he was frightened of his father, who often beat them for not doing their work, drank heavily and occasionally beat his wife. His relationship with his mother he remembers as particularly affectionate, although she was quite strict. She was *friendly and chatty* with everyone in the village, and his happiest memories of childhood are of attending mass with her as a small boy. The family were poor, but had sufficient money to avoid prolonged periods on the coast. Francisco's work was to watch the sheep, until he was seven, when he started to help his father on the land. He describes his childhood as *happy* because he knew nothing about the problems of his people. At twelve he went to school for two years and learnt Spanish and how to read and write. This entailed rising at six to work, and more work when he got home, but he enjoyed it and was disappointed when he had to leave because his father needed him to work with him in the fields. This he did *all day, every day*.

When Francisco was fifteen, his father, along with fifty other men, was summoned to the military base, having been told that if he failed to present himself it would prove he was a guerilla. He never returned. After five days the family assumed he was dead. They dared not enquire as this was the height of "La Violencia", with the army

burning houses and crops, and they feared for their own lives. Seven years later Francisco still does not know what happened, but he remembers his sadness. His mother married again two years later, to a man that Francisco liked, although he was a heavy drinker like his father and also sometimes abusive to his mother. His mother appears to have stuck up for herself, and it was her attitudes that impressed themselves on the children, none of whom drink.

After his father's death a civil patrol was formed in the village. Francisco served in it for seven years, doing weekly 24-hour shifts. The work was not dangerous - it entailed mostly road watching and wood carrying - but he clearly found the experience offensive and humiliating because of the way the army treated them. For example the army called the patrollers *words which weren't allowed to us in our life* such as *"shit"*, words which he had great difficulty repeating to me because of their offensiveness. He stayed in the patrols until hearing about CERJ in 1988.

Pedro told me he had *no good memories of his childhood.* Like Francisco, his father drank heavily and was violent with both his wife and children; the parents fought. *It was a family with a lot of problems.* He remembers having a kind of fearful respect for his father: *when one is a kid one is weak and one cannot protest,* and being very close to his mother who was a *sensitive, caring, sweet, soft character.* However, he did not regard his situation as abnormal: *it's the same in every family with extreme poverty.* He was born

in 1962, the eldest of six children. A brother died at eighteen and a sister in her first year from malnutrition-related illnesses. Pedro thinks both would have survived if they had had money for medicine.

Until he was fifteen they spent more time on the coastal plantations than in his village. Until he was eight he helped his mother make tortillas, after that he worked from six in the morning until three in the afternoon helping his father pick coffee. The family lived like other migrant workers, some 200 people to a thirty-metre tin hut, sleeping on the ground, drinking well- or river-water. Interestingly, in describing these conditions, Pedro remarked that, while he remembered those days with sadness, he was not particularly sad at the time because he saw this as normal life.

Pedro describes himself as a *shy* child who *didn't share any of my pains with people*. Yet when his father permitted him to go to school at ten he made a personal decision to go to the urban school, in spite of the fact that he spoke no Spanish and would have to walk much further. He enjoyed studying, particularly history, and formed a close relationship with one particularly supportive teacher. He himself wanted to be a teacher, but after two years his father withdrew him from school, needing him to earn money on the coast again. Pedro was bitterly disapointed and angry with his father, although he understood the situation and knew their was no point in arguing. From thirteen to fifteen he continued to work on the plantations, which he

loathed. Then he found a job in a small shop: hard work but better conditions. Although he was aware of the agricultural workers' strike, he did not participate in it. His parents had been completely unpolitical and he himself had no interest in politics at that time.

At eighteen he was *kidnapped by the army,* that is, he was forcibly recruited on market day, in spite of the fact that as eldest son he had the right to support his family. The army was a horrifying experience, where *the basic principle of theirs is to humiliate* by calling you *a faggot, you're a little chicken, [a] weak person.* The aim was to destroy indigenous identity. Indigenous clothing was burnt and only Spanish was spoken. A competitive atmosphere made solidarity difficult, and Pedro acknowledges he was

> *brainwashed. [They] would say to us "you're strong men now, you've got to forget about your parents, you've got to forget about everything and you've got to control. The people need control and the same thing's got to happen when you go back to your villages, you've got to control the people of the town."*

He still remembers with shame an incident where he and other soldiers beat up a civilian for no reason. *I still had with me my principles of compassion for people, and I didn't want to get involved, but because they obligated me to, I had to do it.* After six months, worried by the debts his parents were accumulating trying to get him out legally, he managed to desert with a junior soldier. At first he stayed with this man's family, but, not wishing to be a burden he

decided to return to the coast.

He felt he had been changed: *I thought differently, I was very macho, I was very superior.* He went back to his old job, but then began to buy books and *re-educate* himself. He joined a young peoples' religious group for singing and discussion, and planned to start a group himself. *But then this whole thing started with the patrollers and I had to take another step forward and work with that.*

Rosa prefaced her story by telling me it was *a sad one.* Both her parents were peasant farmers. She was born in 1962, the second youngest of five children, one of whom had died aged one. The two elder children left home to get married when Rosa was six. At this point a grandmother died and she describes how *because of the great sadness of my mother and father they no longer valued the lives of the two of us left at home. They didn't value us but, rather, they wanted to die and so they started to drink.*

The drinking went on steadily for seven years, helped by the fact that Rosa's father, as a Maya priest, was brought alcohol by his community. They did not physically abuse Rosa or her sister, and apparently there was *a deep love between them, they always went together, my mother never left my father's side.* But they completely neglected the children, who had to learn how to fend for themselves, from collecting firewood to brushing each other's hair and finding food.

Rosa brought herself and her little sister up. There

was no schooling, partly because of her parents' drunkenness, partly because no one felt it to be necessary. At thirteen she began to worry about her parents' drinking and, having realised that Catholics in the village did not drink, made the decision to convert herself and her parents. She explained that *[I] kept on until I succeeded. It was a big step forward because they stopped drinking and a lot of love came into the house - we ate together and would go out together.*

Her own initial experience of the Catholic Church was unpleasant. The female catechist (a lay preacher and educator) admonished her for being unable to read, write or speak Spanish. She noticed that even those girls and women who could speak Spanish *never had the courage to sing.* Things changed, however, when she was sixteen and a new male catechist arrived who encouraged her in her desire to do parish work, and who had the patience to teach her the catechism. Her admiration for him is clear from her description:

> *an honourable person, a person who gave his time. Not just any person gives their time. He had patience with us, he respected us and valued the work we were doing. He was involved in everything, he played the guitar and sang. He was the first catechist who got women involved.*

One gets a sense of Rosa's own tenacity, intelligence and determination when one understands that she taught herself to read and write in Spanish and Quiche by listening to the sung words and working out their spelling by a

process of elimination on the page. Her parish and community work became increasingly important, as did her frustration at women's position in the community. She decided to remain single for a while in order to work and learn. She became a catechist herself and started to preach, but found that, in spite of the Church's preaching on equality, and the catechist's support, the hierarchy could not accept women preachers like herself: she was "banned" three times from working in the church. *But I didn't take any notice.* She just persisted. By now it was 1982, the height of the violence against the Maya population. Rosa's father wanted the family to stay on the coast, where he worked as a labourer, for safety. Rosa was, therefore, away from her community when the catechist was killed.

The formative experiences of these Guatemalans, taken as isolated stories, certainly bear little resemblance to the "model" presented as conducive to creating an empathic or politically activist self. Except for Christina's, childhoods are marked by alcohol, violence and abuse, both in the family, and from the outside world in the form of more or less marked oppression. Discipline for all the children is coercive, and there are few happy memories of home life, which, from an early age, is distinguished by hard work.

However, these narratives must be set in the context of Maya culture in which there is a strong sense of community and deep respect for parents and elders. Every child is

brought up with a sense of commitment to the values and traditions of their ancestors. Prestige in Maya society depends upon the extent of one's service to others. And although the narratives are marked by violence, there is clearly no lack of love. Both Pedro and Francisco have close relationships with gentle mothers. Rosa is aware of her parents' love and support for each other even when they are drinking.

Such childhoods appear to engender feelings of responsibility at an early age, particularly in older sibs. This is most marked in Rosa who, as a child, felt responsible for helping her parents to recover from alcoholism. This sense of responsibility for the family continues into adult life. At the time of my first interviews in 1990, all my interviewees were taking care of and living with older parents and younger sibs.

What also marks three of them out is their intelligence, assertiveness and determination. Even though they identify themselves as "shy", all want and obtain some kind of education, the girls defying convention to do so. All take slightly unconventional jobs in their determination to progress. Francisco is the least assertive, with his uncritical, rather passive, acceptance of his childhood circumstances and role in village life.

It would be wrong to identify this as striving for individual autonomy in the Western sense. There is no attempt to cut ties with family and community. Rather, there is a sense of achievement for the community; this is

caught in Christina's reaction to being crowned Queen of Quiche. She had no interest in being singled out by *ladinos* as the best-educated indigenous girl. She did not care, but she used the opportunity to speak for, and show her pride in, her community.

None of them come from politically or even communally engaged families and none of them involved themselves in the political turmoil around them in the late 1970s and 1980s. Nor is it possible to distinguish a particular moral voice at this stage. Rosa, through the influence of the catechist, has the most precocious awareness of injustice, but this focusses on the issue most pertinent to her - the place of women in the church.

Values appear to come from a variety of sources: firstly family, particularly an ethic of hard work and responsibility; secondly, the Catholic Church - its teaching on equality particularly impresses Rosa; and, thirdly, from key individuals, such as good teachers and priests.

Poland: WiP

Janek was born in 1958, the eldest of two children. He grew up, like many Poles, living with an extended family of grandparents, uncles and aunts in the same house. He remembers his early childhood as happy, the only unpleasant memory being of his father's occasional beatings which he perceived as normal paternal behaviour but *unfair*. His

father, a lawyer and away from home all week, comes across as a rather distant and severe figure. Janek was closest to his mother, whom he described as warm, caring and protective in the face of his father's discipline. What was also important was that the house was in the suburbs *surrounded by a garden; behind the garden and the house there was woods and water, further water.* So throughout his childhood he *had a close contact with rural nature [. . .] perhaps it is one of the key reasons this liking for the nature, this is why I had been always interested in the environment.*

He enjoyed primary school, where he perceived himself not as a leader but as a part of the *elite* who were always good at games and taking initiative. However, his teenage years were much more difficult. He felt *unable to find his place* in grammar school and was lonely and depressed. Yet he felt unable to discuss these matters at home with his family, whom he now perceived as distant and unable to show emotional warmth. Yet he stresses that in spite of such feelings of alienation he was not apathetic. On the contrary, he was still one of the organisers of school activities.

The family were not overtly political but, like many Poles, they were anti-communist. Janek's maternal grandparents had been deported to Siberia, where his mother was born, and had lost all their possessions, suffering again in the purge of 1956, an injustice which his grandmother often discussed. Father listened to Radio Free Europe and discussed historical events, such as the massacre

of Polish officers at Katyn in 1940 and the war against the Soviet Union in 1921, although contemporary events, like the 1976 strikes, felt quite distant. As Janek grew older he would sometimes deliberately defend communism, largely to *be different* from his father, who encouraged his children to express their views openly without trying to change them. Similarly, values were not taught *didactically* but practised. He remembers his parents' honesty and the way debts were always repaid, while father particularly pointed to the dishonesty of the state.

Janek went to university in Slovakia in 1977 to do transportation studies and, as was the norm, joined the Socialist Student Society. He became secretary of the Polish students' section, not out of any political commitment but, as at school, out of a desire to get something going.

Darek, born in 1959, is the only son of professional parents, although his mother stopped working when he was seven. He gives an ambivalent picture of his childhood: on the one hand, it was *very happy*, with a warm and stable family life. He describes his mother as someone who gave scrupulous attention to the small details of life, and his father as the main intellectual influence, a gentle, practical man who could always find solutions to conflicts without tension. His maternal grandmother was also particularly important: a soft and generous person who had the gift of making those around her feel good. During the

last years of her life, when he was a teenager, she shared his bedroom. On the other hand, looking back he feels he was over-protected and in some ways spoilt. His parents were his main friends, time was filled with worthwhile activities, and there was little space for playing in the street with other children. In addition he was asthmatic and vulnerable to bronchitis, which increased the amount of time he spent at home. Not surprisingly, he describes himself as a good, obedient, and somewhat tense, child.

Although seeing himself now as quite different from both parents, he sees them as having given him his basic values. Although not overtly political, both are devout Catholics, as is Darek, and he points out that he never saw a conflict between *values which are declared and values which are realised*. The family also stressed the importance of history, both family history and Polish history. Darek grew up knowing that his great-grandfather had lost all his lands in the Polish insurrection of 1863, and that his grandfather had been one of Pilsudski's legionnaires.

Darek's history teacher at secondary school was also particularly influential: an inspired teacher who, although he avoided controversial issues, communicated his own love of the subject to Darek to the point where Darek thought of studying history at university. It was in the last years of secondary school that his engagement in politics began.

Of all the activists in the study **Piotr** puts the most emphasis on his family background and upbringing as

contributing to his values and behaviour in life. Both parents are from the Polish aristocracy. Piotr is himself a prince. Both parents suffered from discrimination and material hardship in the Stalinist Poland of the 1980s, before their children were born, but even so Piotr, born in 1959, and his younger brother and sister were brought up with a sense of *noblesse oblige, this was the basis of my education.* He explained that *it meant because I have been given more, so I have to give more, I have to be responsible for others, and I have to give example to the others. I have to be more honest. Because it's my duty.* The *more* that he had been given was not material wealth, which was obviously lacking, but the *tradition* of his family. Moreover, while he lived only with parents and sibs he was made to feel part of a very extensive family, as he demonstrated by showing me an engraving of the family tree hung on the apartment wall. He also insisted that, while he had felt different from others as a child, this was not a sense of superiority.

What he also learnt from his family were strong moral principles based on the Catholic faith. As with Darek and Janek, his father was a somewhat distant figure when Piotr was a small child, a *loving, quiet* man preoccupied by hard work, and, as Piotr grew older, someone with whom he would quarrel over intellectual matters. His mother was his *best friend* with whom he shared everything. He describes his mother as a woman of clear moral principles and deep faith, generous and helpful with neighbours and family, and

teaching him through example rather than lectures. He remembers, for example, that *we didn't read many books about war, we didn't look at war movies, we didn't have military toys.*

He remembers his childhood as happy but very poor. However, in our second interview, Piotr told me that the one blight on his childhood was his father's heavy drinking. This did not affect family life or his father's work, but Piotr was aware of it for as long as he could remember, and even tried to discuss it with his father when he was seven. What upset him was that his father seemed to have problems that could not be solved. Looking back he recognises that his father was frustrated at being prevented from following his chosen career, and pressured by harassment because of his name and by poverty. Later in life things improved. And in spite of the drinking Piotr still saw his father as a *model* for life.

Piotr had no difficulties with school. He was popular, did consistently well academically, and was not afraid to argue with teachers with whom he disagreed. He was the kind of child that helped others with their homework and became class captain. However, like Janek, in his mid-teens he had a period of intense loneliness and alienation. He could identify no immediate cause and it was one experience he was unable to share with his mother. The feelings were severe enough for him to go to the railway station and consider suicide, but his faith and a basic feeling that this was *not right* prevented him. When discussing it with me he remarked

in some ways I think I was lonely all my life. I mean I never had really good friends, besides my mother and my wife. In spite of being respected and popular, he mostly felt that people around him treated life more superficially than he did. Thus, although very sociable, he always felt somewhat apart. He read widely. *My father was an enemy of TV, and I didn't have a TV set until I was seventeen.* Also, as a teenager, he helped in his uncle's underground publishing house and *read everything, every line that was there. Not only books but also bulletins. [It] confirmed ideas and it made my view on the world wider.*

The decision to do medicine was a pragmatic one. His inclination was to do philosophy, but the course was very Marxist and he knew he needed to earn a living. It was while he was at medical school that he became involved in student Solidarity (NZS).

Magda was born in 1960 and, like Diana, had a childhood marked by comings and goings. Her parents divorced when she was seven, and her father went to the United States when she was nine. She describes her parents as *not caring very much emotionally*, and perceived her mother, who married twice, more as *the kind of person that doesn't care about serious things very much.* Yet she feels her childhood was not unhappy. This is, firstly, because she developed a *defence system* that put everything in the best possible light - thus her family was more *interesting* than others, and a father in the United States meant she could go there too. Secondly,

because both parents worked, her main caretakers were her grandparents and great grandmother, who if anything *took too much care of me.*

Her great-grandmother was particularly important: a generous, conscientous woman, who was also *very stubborn,* a trait Magda feels she has inherited. All her family were *decent* - meaning anti-communist - but politics was something *mysterious* which tended to be discussed, if at all, behind closed doors. This infuriated Magda, who was curious and interested. However, as in the other Polish families, Magda grew up knowing her own family history well. Many of her relatives had suffered or died in the Second World War, either in concentration camps or in the Warsaw uprising, and as a child she had fantasies, inspired by Polish war movies, in which she was one of the heroes. *I was sorry that I was not a man and that if the war came against Germany again that I wouldn't be able to fight with them.*

She describes herself as an independent and self-contained child who could amuse herself for hours. Primary school was stressful because she was placed in a class for especially able gymnasts, which she hated. However, at secondary school, she discovered that she could not be intimidated and therefore could really do what she wanted. She remembers clearly the time this discovery was made: at a summer camp, when she refused to go on a particular outing *because it was boring,* and the other girls followed her lead. She was threatened with expulsion. Pleased at the thought of leaving she packed her things, at which point the

punishment was withdrawn and she was told to stay. She suddenly realised that she was not bothered by the worst those in authority could do. So after that *I never listened to any orders.* She prided herself on her individualism and resisted wearing a uniform or joining anything. She was bright and did well, particularly in Russian, which made her uncomfortable because it was *the language of the dominant power.*

Another significant experience occurred on a visit to England after leaving school, when she made friends with a German girl whose father had been a Nazi. Magda felt it was as if providence was giving her a particular chance for reconciliation and to *break with hostility.* This feeling increased when she stayed with both the German friend and a Jewish friend in Germany.

Magda then went to live in the United States with her father, but found the life there dull, and resented her father's interference with her choice of boyfriends or what she should study at university. Meanwhile, it was 1980 and, although Magda had never taken an interest in politics, she was interested in what was happening in her homeland. She decided to return, going to university to study linguistics. She met her boyfriend there, who shared his own much deeper understanding of politics and history with her. However, still uninterested in joining organisations, she stayed out of student Solidarity (NZS), though she did participate in the student strike at the end of 1981 *because there was no other way to behave.* Her participation was a *citizen's duty*

not because she felt patriotic but because she believed that *freedom should be everywhere and also here. If I am here, I should fight for it here.* She did not regard this participation as political engagement and was not involved in anything else until the creation of WiP a few years later.

The first thing that one notices about the Polish activists is that, compared to their Guatemalan and British contemporaries, they were politically literate from an early age, yet did not perceive themselves or their families as political. Being political in communist Poland meant to be engaged in Communist party politics. To be politically "decent", to use Magda's word, meant to be anti-communist, anti-Soviet and, in a sense, "anti-political" - which is what all of these families were. This anti-political activity was considered to be moral activity. To be a practising Catholic in itself was a political statement, of commitment to Polish identity as well as of religious belief.

One of the most significant values passed on by my Polish respondents' families was a particular understanding of Polish history. All had family members to whom they were close who had participated in historic events. Public history was family history, not something dry, and removed, in a textbook. So the idea of being an actor in public events was not a completely strange one. Indeed, Magda takes participation in a student strike so much for granted that she did not regard it as political engagement. These

stories also show that what was learnt at home was of greater significance than the ideological teaching at school.

All grew up either close to or living with extended families, and grandparents are, as with some of the Greenham women, as significant a source of values as parents. The Catholic faith provided the framework of morality, and although Magda and Janek do not adopt the clear religious commitment of their parents - as Darek and Piotr do - they see themselves as influenced by a Christian upbringing. One can also distinguish a clear moral focus in Piotr's and Magda's narratives. Piotr's explanation of *noblesse oblige* emphasises reciprocity, while Magda's childhood fantasies are about justice through retribution. Magda then traces the growth of her own perspective on reconciliation through the experience of friendship and connection.

Again, the most noticeable personality trait, besides intelligence, is of a certain kind of independence and assertiveness. Janek and Piotr are initiators. Both have had adolescent crises rather similar to those of Keniston's "Young Radicals".[5] Magda, from her first year in secondary school, follows her own path. This independence is less obvious in Darek before his engagement in politics, but, as we shall see, it emerged rapidly once he became engaged.

All of these stories - in Britain, Guatemala, and Poland - do confirm that it is values and not politics *per*

---

[5] Kenneth Keniston, *Youth and Dissent: The Rise of a New Opposition* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).

se that families pass on to their children. They also show that the concept of family should include grandparents. Another point of note is that, while almost all of the activists have experienced some form of trauma, in the form of parental separation or death, or prolonged illness, or abuse, they have displayed active coping strategies and appear for the most part psychologically healthy. Anna's case is exceptional, but she too has the resilience to find the help she needs. I shall look in more detail at the role of traumatic experiences in Chapter 8.

In spite of evidence of maturity, and the fact that all show an ability, at an early age, to take personal responsibility for themselves and others around them, one cannot say that the majority are marked out by political precocity. On the contrary - notwithstanding the immersion of Poles in their own history - the absence of marked interest in current events is more significant. Moreover, the absence of a conventional childhood and the experience of oppression, including the war of the early 1980s, did not radicalise the Guatemalans. They understand and explain their experiences as the norm for their people. This is in keeping with Andrews's argument that experience alone is not enough to create commitment. It is how experience is interpreted that is significant.

Perhaps the most important points one can make about all twelve respondents is that, firstly, most of them they are noticeably "active" from an early age. The form assertiveness takes, however, differs markedly with gender

and culture. For example, while Rosa and Christina struggle against the odds to get an education, both Mary and Greta refuse to conform with family and school expectations and find ways to escape. For Polish men assertiveness is expressed as leadership in the class. Secondly, all, apart from Francisco, have some experience of self-efficacy, that is, of taking an active part in coping with and trying to change adverse circumstances, and of determining their own futures. As efficacy has been noted as one of the features distinguishing activists from non-activists in cross-sectional studies, it is significant to discover that it emerges before political engagement.

What this chapter shows is the importance of testing generalisations against the detailed study of the individual, which in these cases demonstrates the diversity of background and experience from which non-violent activism emerges, and the significant part played by culture. The next chapter should make clear that engagement is not simply a lifecycle or generational phenomenom but that it can begin in middle age or childhood. The aim of this chapter has been to show that the antecedents of engagement are not rooted in one particular kind of personality or psychopathology. The reader may find it useful before reading Chapter 7 to refer to the summaries of each respondent's history of engagement. [See Appendix 1.]

CHAPTER 7

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS: THE CONVERSION EXPERIENCE AND OTHER ROUTES TO ENGAGEMENT.

Sarah was a middle-class housewife living in a seaside town with her husband and two children. She was already involved with the local Quakers and saw herself as being *on the fringes* of the peace movement, *plodding on with my life, with its moments of happiness and unhappiness, as everybody does,* when one day she saw a television programme in which the contents of a soon-to-be-published government booklet called *Protect and Survive* were leaked.[1] The booklet and the programme explained the measures that the government considered necessary to protect oneself in the event of a nuclear war. She describes what happened:

> *I was watching television, and my children were sort of playing around the house. . . . And when that programme came on it struck something in me so deep I went into shock, actually watching the programme. And my husband came home, walked into the room - it had just finished - and said, "whatever is the matter?" I was just in complete shock and, like, cold inside. I think it was the horror of what they were saying on television. What the government had said was that people like me, if it comes to it, had to build this shelter of four doors and push my children under it and wait to die, basically. I mean, that's how I interpreted what they were saying. And, although I had been peripherally involved in peace activities a bit before, through the Quakers and things, it had never actually hit me in that way before. And I was so, at first so shocked, it was very personal, which is perhaps a wrong reason for getting involved. I remember saying to him "I haven't brought my children into this world to put*

---

[1] Central Office of Information, *Protect and Survive* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980)

them under four doors and watch them die", it was absolutely a moment in time. Then I went through a period of months. I lived opposite the sea, my house looked over the sea and it's very depressing in any case. In the winter you get this grey sea and grey sky, and the power station, which doesn't help. And I did have images of everything just disappearing, of it not being, and what would happen if my children were at school and I was here, I did have nightmares. Actually, the worst nightmare that I had was of my children not dying, of them being terribly burned, or half-alive, or something. And then I became very angry about it and that's what motivated me. I joined the local CND and petitions and all that, but it didn't seem enough, it seemed ridiculous. And a Quaker friend of mine rang me up, and it was about five days after, five or seven - within a week of the Greenham women [arriving at the base] - and said that there was a group of women who had set up a camp outside Greenham and they need food and blankets. She said "let's go for the day". And I went for one day and I just knew that there were other people there who were not telling me that it was an over-emotional reaction. There were other women who were having those kind of experiences, that this was a real threat. That our lives and the planet really were threatened and that we had to do something. Then I knew that that was what I wanted to be involved with.[2]

What Sarah is describing is a **crucial episode** and the manner in which it precipitated a life-changing engagement in the anti-nuclear movement. Sarah is not one of the respondents in my study, but six of them have had similar experiences to the one she describes, experiences in which a life-changing shift of perspective occurs and generates action.

In Chapter 6 I looked at the pre-engagement lives of

---

[2] Interview, 1992.

all my respondents.[3] From these it appeared that all of them had been intelligent and resilient from an early age, and most had already engaged in independent action to change their own life circumstances or those of others around them, that is, they had personal efficacy. In this chapter I shall explore three different processes that led to full-time engagement in collective action. For six respondents, as for Sarah, there appears to be a life-changing event and a sudden change. Fear or a sense of threat are critical to motivation, as is an empathic connection to others. For a second group, there is a more gradual deepening of involvement. This begins at an early age and appears to arise from abstract principles and a particularly strong sense of personal efficacy. In the third group, there is also a gradual deepening of involvement. Fear and threat are, again, significant but, in this case, fear inhibits action and it is the factors which limit the threat that are critical to facilitating engagement. For all my respondents, in contrast to the model proposed by Kohlberg, (summarised in Chapter 3),[4] both cognitive and affective factors are involved in the process of engagement. In addition, for all my respondents, the process entails an increasing awareness of an historical self, that is, of a self with a role to play in public affairs.

---

[3] Biographies of all my respondents' lives, covering the period of political engagement, are provided in Appendix 1 for reference.

[4] See pp. 134--142 above.

Crucial Episodes

A **crucial episode** is an identifiable, time-limited experience that the subject can define -it may last minutes or months - during which there is a marked shift in awareness about an issue, accompanied by an intense affect and followed by a need to act. In analysing my recorded interviews the episodes stand out for a number of reasons. They are remembered with a vividness of recall that provides quite arbitrary detail, like time of day, weather, and the activities of bystanders; while the emotional intensity of the experience is evident both from the fact that such details are imprinted on the respondent's memory, and in the intensity of tone with which such accounts are narrated.

Other writers have examined episodes such as these and their role in the journey to commitment: it is worth examining their main findings briefly. One of the most notable and carefully documented is William James's description and analysis of "conversion" experiences in his lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience", given at the beginning of the century.[5] He looked at both sudden and gradual conversions to particular religious faiths, and showed how the experience appeared to consist of a process where profound emotions of misery, anxiety, worthlessness and despair were transformed into feelings of profound well-being, joy, and a sense of righteousness. Sometimes this

---

[5] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, 1916), pp. 189--258.

occured slowly, sometimes abruptly, sometimes with a period of exhaustion, numbness and even unconciousness in between. He explained the phenomena "as partly due to explicitly conscious processes of thought and will, but as due largely also to the subconscious incubation and maturing of motives deposited by the experiences of life. When ripe, the results hatch out or burst into flower."[6] He then defines the sudden experiences as characterised by "tremendous emotional excitement or perturbation of the senses (in which) a complete division is established between the old life and the new".[7] The result of the conversion is that the protagonist now experiences "a sense of higher control", "a loss of all worry", "a sense of peace", "a willingness to be", and a sense of now being able to perceive previously unknown truths. In addition, things take on an "appearance of newness that beatifies every object",[8] and the protagonist experiences an "ecstasy of happiness".[9] In the case histories provided, conversion is followed by a commitment to action in some form. He argues that these experiences "owe more to the incursion of ordinary conscious life from the subliminal" than to any particular grace of God.[10] He presents some evidence that sudden converts have

---

[6] Ibid., p. 230.

[7] Ibid., p. 217.

[8] Ibid., p. 248.

[9] Ibid., p. 254.

[10] When reading the lecture, one can sense his tentativeness in proposing such an outrageous theory at the turn of the century to an audience that undoubtedly

a very "active subconcious life" compared to those whose awareness comes more gradually. He also makes the point that conversion on the whole appears to be enduring.

For Erikson such crucial episodes highlight the developmental crises that he details and analyses in his studies of the lives of Gandhi and Luther. As I explained in Chapter 3, Erikson's work centres on the thesis that the human life cycle can be defined in terms of a series of stages that "dovetail" with basic human institutions.

> At a given age, a human being, by dint of his physical, intellectual and emotional growth, becomes ready and eager to face a new life task, that is, a set of choices and tests which are in some traditional way prescribed and prepared for him by his society's structure. A new life task presents a crisis whose outcome can be a successful graduation or, alternatively, an impairment of the life cycle which will aggravate future crises.[11]

However, whereas in some periods the transitions and resolutions to the crises may be accomplished in established and traditional rites of passage, at others society itself is in crisis, and the resolution of individual psychological crisis at that time is inextricably intermeshed with the

---

contained many with strong religious convictions. He reassures them by explaining that he is not substituting natural causes for the call of God, but suggesting that indeed the subconscious may be more open to God's influence than the concious mind, beset as the latter is with all the distractions of everyday life; besides which, in theological terms, it is surely the fruits of the call, not its origins, that matter.

[11] Erik H.Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (London: Norton, 1958), p. 254.

resolution of the historical one.

For Erikson crucial episodes highlight these developmental crises in the life cycle. In particular, they demonstrate the interaction between the self and history. Hence the significance of the famous episode when Gandhi is ejected from a first class railway compartment on the train to Pretoria and spends a chilly night contemplating his own and his peoples' condition: this is the moment when Gandhi solves his identity crisis by transfoming himself from a shy young barrister into a religious and political leader needed at that time to solve the historical crisis that faced his people.[12]

Luther's identity crisis is marked by at least "three distinct and fragmentary experiences", whose elements were:

> Physical paroxysm; a degree of unconsciousness; an automatic verbal utterance; a command to change the overall direction of effort and aspiration; and a spiritual revelation, a flash of enlightenment, decisive and pervasive as rebirth. The thunderstorm [in which he was struck from his horse and made a vow to be a monk] provided him with a change in the overall direction of his life, a change towards the anonymous, the silent, and the obedient. In fits such as the one in the choir he experienced the epileptoid paroxysm of ego loss, the rage of denial of the identity which was to be discarded. And later in the experience in the tower . . . he perceived the light of a new spiritual formula.[13]

It is interesting to note that Erikson feels the

---

[12] Erik H.Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis.* (London: Faber, 1969), p. 47.

[13] Erikson, *Young Man Luther,* p. 39.

fragmentary nature of the episode - Luther has not attempted to tidy up the experience - bears out its veracity and Luther's integrity in reporting it.

Erikson demonstrates how this new formula, the basis of the solutions that Luther proposed for the problems of his time, in particular the political and psychological vacuum in the Western Catholic Church, also provided solutions to his own identity crisis, particularly in terms of confronting his problematic relationship with his father.

Frank and Nash, in a study of some of the determinants of commitment to peace, deliberately focussed on a self-selected sample of activists whose commitment was the result of "a well defined, relatively brief experience termed a crucial episode". They analysed the questionnaire responses of ninety-two volunteer subjects who became active after a crucial episode.[14]

The study and its follow-up are extremely useful in laying out clearly what were the activists' preceding states of mind, what the features of such episodes might be, and what internal and environmental factors sustained attitude change. The only common feature of the episodes was that a particular event could be identified as a "definite step in [the respondents'] progress towards peace activity"; otherwise there was a wide variation, ranging from events that precipitated minimal attitude change but a great

---

[14] Jerome D. Frank and Earl H. Nash, "Commitment to Peace Work: A Preliminary Study of Determinants and Sustainers of Behaviour Change", *American Journal Of OrthoPsychiatry* 35 (1965), pp. 106--119.

increase in activity, to experiences resembling religious conversion.

The example that Frank and Nash provide as representative of the whole study is strikingly similar to Sarah's experience recounted above. The respondent in question had many years previously attended a Quaker college and "had always had a personal abhorrence of all forms of violence". She had however, until Autumn 1961, managed to avoid thinking about nuclear war by trusting in government policy. However, the resumption of testing and the building of the Berlin Wall increased her anxiety about the nuclear threat. So she took what appeared to be the rational course and wrote away for goverment pamphlets on the building of a fall-out shelter. It was while reading this advice that it suddenly dawned on her how completely vulnerable she was. "It had honestly never dawned on me that there was no place to hide. I've never known such panic, and chilling, paralysing fear and profound depression".

Soon after this she received a call from a long time peace activist who invited her to participate in a women's silent vigil of protest. Although initially opposed to this form of action as counterproductive, she was deeply impressed by the woman's arguments about the need to take personal responsibility, and she initiated a discussion group in which she discovered that "there were other women who felt as I did: we had found each other and out of our fears came a new determination to influence the decisions that suddenly seemed to have such a direct and threatening

relationship to our lives". Her commitment and activism continued to increase, sustained by reading new books, the support of other people, and a conviction of the rightness and moderate effectiveness of her actions.

Frank and Nash's analysis is that the intense emotions were triggered by an inability to use her conventional coping mechanisms to deal with a newly perceived nuclear threat. This anxiety made her receptive to the suggestions of the peace worker, and her newly formed attitudes and choice of action were then reinforced and extended by public action, group support, new information and increased self-esteem.

Frank and Nash caution that their sample was self-selected, heterogeneous and, because it was 92 per cent-college educated, unrepresentative of the general population. However, they tentatively drew the following conclusions from a systematic anlysis of the data:[15] the respondents before the episode were characterised by a high degree of initiative, a lively concern for human welfare, and an independence of thought, all of which predisposed them to heightened awareness of the threat to humanity, a critical disposition towards government, and a tendency to act on their own interpretation of a problem. Attitudes before the episode were already "unfrozen" (following Kurt Lewin's model of the three stages involved in changes in social conduct - unfreeze old patterns, change, and

---

[15] Frank and Nash, "Commitment to Peace Work".

refreeze.[16]) Many were already conflicted and uncertain about their attitudes to the threat and their awareness of the dangers had increased. The crucial episodes contained three important components:

1) heightening of threat of personal destruction, which becomes personally real;

2) a discovery that former coping methods - e.g., reliance on government and its suggestions for protection - do not work, resulting in an intense emotional response; and

3) the arousal of a feeling of personal responsibility to do something to remove the danger, and the active seeking of means and guidance as to how to do this; or at least a greatly enhanced sensitivity to those with suggestions for action.

The changes in beliefs and behaviour following the episode were sustained by new information, repeated demonstrations of public commitment through giving talks and demonstrating, the support of like-minded friends and family, a conviction of rightness, increased self esteem, and a reduction of unpleasant feelings such as anxiety and depression. Moreover, there was a generalising of concern, anchoring nuclear issues to other issues of human welfare. This could be seen as evidence of a need to make a belief system consistent, and to reduce cognitive dissonance. For example, an attitude shift regarding the relatively greater dangers of nuclear war compared to the threat of communism

---

[16] Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (New York: Harper, 1951), pp. 141--145.

took place for the majority after their engagement in activism. This supports the view that changes in behaviour can push attitude change. Demonstrating for disarmament would be inconsistent with a view that communism was the greatest threat, so the attitude to that threat had to change.

Significantly, it was noted that "changes in behaviour far exceeded changes in attitude. . . . The crucial episodes served chiefly to clarify existing attitudes, to make them more salient or to remove blocks to acting on them, such as feelings of fatalism or impotence." [17] Further analysis of the results showed that "women were more likely to be influenced by direct personal contact, men by the printed word. Concern over the welfare of of one's children heightened sensitivity to events that threatened their future." [18] The degree of attitude change was related to the intensity of emotional arousal and to changes in friends, while the duration of change in activity was related to support from family and, with men only, from friends.

Haste uses the term "triggering event", rather than crucial episode, and defines this as "any event which changes the role of the individual from being a bystander, an observer, to being a participant, personally touched by

---

[17] Frank and Nash, "Commitment to Peace Work".

[18] Jerome D. Frank and Jacob D. Schonfield, "Commitment to Peace Work: II. A Closer Look at the Determinants", *American Journal Of OrthoPsychiatry* 37 (1967), p. 118.

the situation".[19] This is a wide definition, but her five case histories are of individuals who have experienced "conversion experiences which involved powerful affect", and she uses them to challenge the thesis, best exemplified by Kohlberg and Candee and summarised in Chapter 3, that it is mainly in cognitive variables that one should seek explanations for the origins of moral action, and that the main energy for action comes from the individual's perception of responsibility. Haste's view is that triggering events demonstrate that initial engagement in an issue is affective.

She outlines a complex model in which a triggering event produces a reactive affect, cognitive reflection upon this transforms it into a moral affect, which in turn generates the subsequent cognition that one is personally responsible for acting. The degree of responsibility, and the extent to which the individual feels personally efficacious, are partially determined by previously established cognitive structures, such as moral stage and social cognitive perception. In addition, she shows that such episodes are not unitary phenomena: they may be a sequence of related incidents, and may trigger a cycle of response and engagement that, through the further arousal of affect and further cognitive reappraisal and reorganisation, "triggers" an even greater commitment to action. She

---

[19] Helen Weinreich-Haste, "Moral Responsibility and Moral Commitment: The Integration of Affect and Commitment", in *The Moral Domain*, ed. T. E. Wren (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 315-359.

stresses that social context is important, particularly in determining whether the cognitive reappraisal of an event will be perceived as socially legitimate or not.

At first glance it might appear that the range of experience covered by these different researchers is too wide to produce a useful synthesis. Do the ecstatic transcendent states of those who feel they have just encountered God really have anything in common with the despair of a woman who has just realised a fall-out shelter will not protect her from a nuclear holocaust? Can one group together events where there is little attitude change, but simply a reinforcing of established beliefs, with those where there is a complete transformation? Some episodes immediately generate action, some do not, and the sequence of commitment appears to vary.

For example, when one looks at the these researchers' case material in detail, including source material for two of Haste's cases, it is arguable whether the arousal of affect always precedes cognitive reappraisal and transformation to moral affect in the clear-cut way Haste describes. In many cases some kind of cognitive reappraisal and moral evaluation, or unfreezing - to use Lewin's term - is going on before the episode: for example, Luther is already in conflict with his father before the thunderstorm over whether or not to enter the church. Many of Frank's respondents are increasingly bothered by the nuclear build-up before their own crucial episodes. Gandhi had already learnt about and been disturbed by the inequities of the

apartheid system in South Africa. On the bases of these histories and my own research I would suggest that prior cognitive awareness is actually necessary for the episode to have its full emotional impact.

However, all the evidence available supports the main thrust of Haste's argument, which is that it is affect and not merely cognition that energises the individual into taking action. And, in my view, the heart of the crucial episode, the key element that all have in common, is the arousal of intense affect and subsequent feeling of personal involvement.

My interest with my own data is not only to see how the episodes described compare with the findings above, both in terms of the nature of the episodes and of their place in the sequence of commitment. It is, more particularly, to look at what it is about the episode that arouses such an intense affective response. Can one identify any common themes through the wide variety of experiences and the wide range of emotions produced? My hypothesis is that one can: there seem to be three common features to the majority of crucial episodes (certainly those producing major life-change). They are that the episodes:

are threatening to the self: they produce images of the loss of life or of destruction of aspects of identity;

are historical: not arbitrary or personal, they are symbolic in some way of the historical crisis of the time; and

frame an historical event or stimulus in such a way as

to give it personal meaning. This can happen directly by the event involving the individuals themselves, or indirectly, by the event involving someone with whom they closely identify or to whom they are attached.

As a consequence, the event produces a feeling of acute vulnerability in the self, to the point of annihilation; at the same time it catapults the self into history. There is now a feeling of connection and relationship to the political world that generates responsibility and a need to act, both on one's own behalf and on behalf of that world to which one now feels connected. It is this sudden awareness of both one's own vulnerability and of a historical self that produces such intense emotions and the sense of a historical role. It is as if history had literally reached out and grabbed one by the hand so that there is the need to personally involve oneself in a public crisis.

This is best exemplified by looking in detail at the experiences of some of the respondents in my study. First, however, I shall return to Sarah. She is already cognitively aware of the issues and peripherally involved in peace movement: for example, she *wears badges*. The television programme is clearly a historical event. The revelation of the goverment's ludicrous advice on protection against a nuclear attack takes place in 1980, amidst the growing atmospere of public concern about nuclear issues that I documented in Chapter 5. The planned publication of such advice demonstrates that the government itself feels threatened. What the programme does is frame this event in

a way that makes Sarah realise that nuclear war is not just the business of politicians out there: a matter of moral interest and concern that it is right to challenge but that is on the periphery of her world. Rather, it is personal: it is an issue that threatens her and her children directly with annihilation. And the information *hits her like a thunderbolt*. She realises that she will have to put the children under a table to die, or that they may survive horribly without her, but, conversely, there is also the sense that what touches her is historical. She has images of *everything disappearing* and of *not being*. Her *anguish* is at *the threat to my life* and the threat to the planet (my emphasis). Sarah is suddenly thrown into forced intimacy with what was previously a general but distant historical threat.

Not surprisingly, confronted directly with the real possibility of her own and general annihilation, Sarah's emotional reaction is intense and shows all the stages identified by Kubler Ross in individuals confronting terminal illness: shock, numbness, despair, depression, and anger.[20] In a sense one could say that it was almost as if she had died and was grieving for herself. Kubler Ross's final stage is acceptance, which, she emphasises, is neither the giving up of hope nor the giving in to exhaustion, but an ability honestly to come to terms with what is happening. For Sarah it is the acceptance of the validity and reality

---

[20] Elizabeth Kubler Ross, *On Death and Dying* (London: Tavistock, 1970).

of her fears that creates a need to act.

However, I want to make clear in drawing this analogy that I do not see the crucial episodes that I describe as resulting from the breakdown of denial. Denial is the exclusion of ideas and feelings from the conscious mind. Lifton's concept of psychic numbing is far more useful here. He defines numbing as "a diminished capacity to feel". Rather than ideas and experiences being actively excluded from the conscious mind, they are there but not felt. There is

> an impairment of the human being's essential mental function of symbolisation, . . . an incapacity to feel or to confront certain kinds of experience, due either to blocking or the absence of prior imagery that would enable one to connect with such experience. Thus there is an essential separation of image and associated feeling.[21]

What seems to happen in a crucial episode is that, because of its personally threatening form, feeling and previously acquired knowledge, images and experience are reconnected, and numbing is overcome. Once this defence of numbing is removed another way of coping must be devised to deal with the threat.

Lifton's work has primarily been with survivors of various traumas and upheavals, such as Vietnam veterans, or survivors of Hiroshima. The theme that dominates much of his writing is the way that these survivors have, through "anxious immersion in death imagery", confronted the

---

[21] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Future of Immortality and Other Essays for a Nuclear Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), p. 240.

possibility of their own annihilation, ended their own numbing and have become able to re-order their existence and that of the world around them in a creative way.[22] What Lifton stresses is that survivorhood, even of imagined death, confers a sense of animating guilt and responsibility.

It is not too difficult to look at Sarah's experience as one of immersion in death imagery and of survival from this imagined holocaust. She has, to quote Lifton, "struggled to grasp her experience of death immersion and render it significant".[23] Thus, she feels a need and responsibility to act. The first visit to Greenham puts her in touch with others who share her views, which helps to legitimate and sustain the views in the way described by Haste and Frank. It also triggers a further cycle of deepening commitment.

The particular motivating power of survivorhood shows clearly in Rosa's case. Her home region in Guatemala suffered most heavily in the early 1980s. At the height of "La Violencia" Rosa's father insisted they move to the relative safety of the coast, and it was while she was there that she heard of the murder of the catechist who had taught, encouraged and supported her. The impact of this event can be judged from her ability to relate, almost as if present, what happened:

---

[22] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. 392.

[23] Lifton, *The Future of Immortality*, p. 245.

> *[He] was accused of subversion, the army came and got him and killed him. The took him off and tortured him for a week, trying to get him to say who his companeros were, but he couldn't say anything, or they would have killed all the Catholics in the canton. But since he wouldn't say anything they brought him back to the canton and killed him, with axes and bullets they killed him in the churchyard. That's how we know very well that he is dead because there, in front of the whole community, they killed him. They got all the men together and said "we're going to kill this man because he's a subversive".*

Her grief was profound: *When we learnt that he had been killed we cried every day, when we ate, at every meal we'd always think of him that he'd been murdered.*

The indigenous community as a whole faced extermination. She was well aware of the facts and was happy to share her family's rational method of coping - escape - until the moment when, through the loss of a friend whom she admired and respected and with whom she closely identified, the historic catastrophe became intensely personal. Along with her feelings of shock and grief there are also feelings of guilt and responsibility, both for the event occurring - she thought that his betrayal might have been caused by members of the community who had *bad thoughts* about their quite innocent teacher--pupil relationship - and for her survival on the coast. The personal loss is also seen in its historic context: *They had killed three other leaders in the cantons and there was no one left to take charge.* Her survivorhood in the face of such annihilation gives her clear responsibilities: she feels she has a duty to return. *I said he's dead, but I'm here and I've got to*

carry on the work, because we've been doing it. I had to give the people encouragement. . . . So I started to take charge and from that time I had the opportunity to teach my community.

In Rosa's case, the historic threat is made personal in an indirect manner, but it can be seen that the episode is no less powerful for this. This is the beginning of full-time commitment to human rights work: currently, Rosa is one of the leaders of CONAVIGUA. Her interest, she says, is *to make history in Guatemala, with the women themselves, with the indigenous people, we've got to make our history.*

I want to stress Erikson's point that these episodes do not always occur in a neat, confined manner. There can be a number of significant but fragmentary occurrences that need to be looked at together to understand fully the dynamics of what is happening. This was the case with **Mary**. As is clear from her biography, she had alway been independent-minded and concerned about social issues, including nuclear weapons, but was never a *joiner*. Although she had participated in demonstrations she *hadn't ever really understood what they were hoping to achieve. I always thought it was a total waste of time; I used to think they were lunatics. . . wasting all this shoe leather going from A to B and then going home.*

However, after her family's move to Wales in the late 1970s, she discovered that there was a plan to dump nuclear waste in the area. *I thought . . . bloody cheek, you know, I've moved here from London and here they were bringing it*

to me, you know. And I had played the game, I hadn't upset anybody for a few years, and thought, what a bloody nerve.

She joined the local anti-dumping coalition, but was not particularly active until one morning, when she read about a group of young people building a platform on a railway line and sitting on it to blockade a train carrying nuclear waste.

> *My normal procedure was to take the kids to school, buy The Guardian, go home and read it, make the beds, do all those robotic things, and I didn't do all that. I read The Guardian, heard, saw about these characters, realised in some strange way that they had done this by proxy for me, and felt that it was up to me to do something by proxy for them. It was very personal, yes. I think it was a very direct link with me as an individual, that these eight people had committed an act that was directly on my behalf. And I got going on that. It actually made me do something political, that I actually got out some container and I started bashing on peoples' doors and asking them for money, to help pay their fine.*

All the dimensions that I have outlined are present to a moderate degree: there is the general historical threat of nuclear waste, already made personal to Mary by its possible arrival in her backyard; and the immediate and concrete threat to individuals with whom Mary clearly identifies, feeling that they acted on her behalf. This identification is what creates a sense of connection for Mary, both with the individuals and the issue. And connection generates responsibility: the individuals had made themselves vulnerable, both during the action which was imaginative and risky, and to long-term prison sentences and fines. So Mary

feels she must do something to help them. One senses from the interview that, as well as the negative emotions of anger about the issue, there is also admiration and respect and a sense of guilt at not so far having acted herself.

The next significant event was an invitation to attend the inaugural meeting of the Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance. As before, previously acquired knowledge was given personal and emotional significance. It was

> *the sudden realisation of what the cruise and Pershing missiles coming to Europe actually represented. It was seeing young people there, whose futures were going to be damaged, trying desperately to do something to stop it. [. . .] It was seeing all these youngsters that really weren't going to have a future, possibly because my generation had not worked hard enough to prevent this happening now. It was a fit of guilt, I think, that got me going.*

Again, the sense of threat and vulnerability arouse feelings of guilt and personal responsibility for others. She joins the Labour party and becomes increasingly informed about the connections between cruise missiles and Wales. She discovers that the area is within the range for dispersal and easily a target area.

Given her increasing understanding, it is not surprising that the next crucial episode that Mary describes is the most directly threatening and arouses the most intense emotions:

> *I was travelling along in the car and I suddenly got this clear image of what the countryside would look like when it was devastated. It is pretty barren countryside anyway, because you could look*

over to the mountains. But I could just see the absolute ashes and everything. And it really, really had a terrible effect on me and I had to stop driving. Well, I was there for about half an hour or three-quarters of an hour, and I was so angry. I was very upset to start with, and that made me just so angry that I really knew I had to sort of pull out all the stops and do everything I personally could at that moment. It was the determination that, you know, I would have to do something and that I wouldn't, I wouldn't be stopped.

I would suggest that the power of such imagery comes from the fact that Mary already **knew** cognitively what was possible, otherwise she could not have summoned up the landscape. But this sudden unsolicited visualisation enabled her to **feel** what it would be like, to feel her own vulnerability and experience intense misery and anger similar to Sarah's. Knowledge and feeling are thus powerfully connected, and numbing, already undermined by previous episodes, is completely impossible. These feelings, combined with the already aroused sense of guilt and personal responsibility, create a feeling of having to act. What is also clear is that the impact of the episodes was cumulative, building up over a period.

I want to look briefly at the crucial episodes in the life of **Darek** from Poland, in order further to underline how these events create an awareness of the self in history and of history in the self. Darek was brought up with a strong sense of family tradition and of his personal historical roots. Family history was endlessly discussed at home and Darek sees history as critical to his first moment of connection to the Polish opposition. Before the episode he

had already become aware that Polish opposition politics were in some way personally important.

> *My first political engagement was when in 1976 I turned on Radio Free Europe and I heard that in Ursus and Radom there were demonstrations. I think I was shocked because my childhood was in the normal world without political accents and so on, but this moment in 1976 was the moment I felt I began my more personal life, more adult life also. It was also a very important moment because it was the year of my first class, in the secondary school.*

Darek sees the significance of the moment arising from the fact that for him demonstrations were abnormal.

> *I hadn't seen demonstrations here. I hadn't seen anybody beaten in the street like it was in Radom and Ursus. They were telling about those demonstrations, about the intervention of police and the political crisis in Poland, so it was the door to the new world.*

But at this point he felt no real a sense of personal involvement or a need to act. That moment came in 1977 after the death, in Krakow, of Staszek Pyas, a Polish theology student who had been collecting money and arranging help for workers in Radom and Ursus and who had died after being pushed from a third-floor window by the police. Darek knew nothing about the incident until the moment when he and his best friend were walking through the centre of Krakow and saw

> *a very strange situation: black, young people dressed in black with candles, standing and giving leaflets to people, leaflets, and speaking about the death of Staszek. And outside the house in*

Szefska Street we saw a long queue of people who wanted to see this place [where Staszek had been killed]; who wanted to give flowers and who wanted to know something.

Darek explained how at this point there was already a strange atmosphere in Krakow because a new church in Nowa Huta was nearing completion and there were rumours prophesying the end of the world when the church opened. He felt this atmosphere contributed to the *very deep emotion,* that he felt on seeing the mourners: *a huge emotion of, of . . . I don't know, being proud, being independent and . . . also of being free. I was seventeen during this time so it was my private freedom and it was my freedom as a Pole, as one of young people.*

The growth of awareness of a historical self could not be more clearly demonstrated. *Polish big history and Polish private history,* to use Darek's own words, collide. Although Darek denies feeling much identification with the killed student, there is clearly a feeling of connection both with Pyas and the young people in black. This adds to his feeling of vulnerability brought on by the sense of apocalyptic threat and the symbolism of mourning and death. In Darek's case, these feelings occur simultaneously with feelings of empowerment, which increase as he involves himself in subsequent events:

three days later there was a big demonstration of students in Krakow, the street was completely filled with people and I was in this crowd and I remember the silence of this crowd and it was like the accumulator in the car, of giving energy to

the accumulator.

Darek's crucial episodes also provide a good example of the way developmental crises (as defined by Erikson) can coincide with a historic crisis. Thus, in Darek's case, the resolution of his identity crisis is inextricably bound up with an active attempt to resolve the political crisis in his country. The intensity of this whole episode is so great that he breaks with his closest friend, for whom it has no significance (an action he regrets now, feeling friendship can overide political difference), and throws himself into oppositional activity: participating in demonstrations, and organising an exhibition and independent history classes. He becomes part of a network that provides him with more information, social support and the legitimation and confirmation of his views.

Two other activists have clearly defined episodes of this kind. Magda describes the imposition of martial law as a *deep crisis [. . .] because I didn't think in any political terms before. I always thought I had a father in the United States so whenever I don't like anything I can go.* Politics was not her concern. However, she had intended to travel to the Soviet Union the day after martial law was imposed and found that she could not. This was to be the first of many occasions that politics would stop her from doing something she wanted to do. She found that

> *it also concerns me [that] I can be so much deprived of my personal freedom, to such an extent that stupid men can say that [I cannot go], so*

it's a time when I started to think of . . . I thought that I would never cooperate with this country. I would not even work here, I mean work officially.

She participated in the protest demonstrations because it was *a citizen's duty to go, let them see that we are here,* and was shocked at police brutality. *I never thought such a thing could happen.* A further blow was the refusal of a passport, when both she and her boyfriend had been accepted for a linguistic scholarship to the United States.

At the time I thought, okay, I have to make a revenge, not really revenge but for me: it was even more the realization of how a stupid thing like the army ruins people's lives. It's things like that that [made me feel] my personal freedom diminish, my dignity was disappearing.

Again there is a series of political events over a short period which increase the sense of personal vulnerability and engender an increased sense of connection and responsibility. Escape is not seen as an appropriate method of coping. In Magda's case, however, although there is clearly commitment, apart from demonstrating more life-changing action did not follow immediately, because she did not have access to the resources or networks that made it possible to act in the way she wanted. Here Magda contrasts the difficulties of working with Solidarity in the early 1980s and with WiP four years later.

I wanted to be involved before in some politics, but there was too much conspiracy and it was so difficult to get to any group [. . .] because it

was like you were a knight and you had to work in special ways, so it was to difficult for me. . . . I was not frightened, but I thought it was too difficult for me to get to, and also the other thing was that when you started to begin with some political group . . . they make you do very stupid things, so we never had any influence on what was really the politics:. . . they make you, like, for example, produce the leaflets, and although someone might have had political interests it was not possible to say a word. You were just told what to do:" okay, you want to be involved, so do it", and politics is done somewhere else. That was with Solidarity, for example. [. . .] I guess WiP was different . . . because it was open, their names were published, so it was easy to find those people, so I just went to them and I said I also want to be [part of this], and so it was easy. And then, from the very beginning, we - because I went together with Adam - could participate in meetings and in the discussion of issues. . . .

It was WiP's accessibility and the possibilities it offered for direct involvement in the issues that mattered to her and that made it possible for Magda to act on feelings aroused four years earlier.

This illustrates the point that, even where there is a sense of personal efficacy, which most of my respondents had before these episodes, the occurrence of a crucial episode may create a need to act but not be enough for actual engagement to occur. When such episodes take place in an environment where there are available models of action and access to other activists, networks, and information, it is possible to observe, as with Darek, the transformation of personal efficacy into political efficacy. When potential activists are relatively isolated and cannot identify a clear role for themselves, as was the case with Magda and Anna, there may be no action at this time. Gender is

clearly important here. Magda was not inspired by the romance of underground politics, as Darek was, nor was she prepared to play the traditional female role of clerical staff. She wanted real engagement on her terms, which, although she had not defined them at that time, were feminist ones. These themes are explored further in Chapter 9. I explore the the transformation of personal into political efficacyin more detail in Chapter 8.

Margaret identifies *a sudden moment* of awareness that occurred in the early 1980s, when hearing a fellow Quaker from her Meeting speak at a study group in her home about the problem of nuclear waste and his fear that it was insoluble. As a result he had left his job at a nuclear facility. At another such meeting she heard about torture for the first time

> *he was talking about people being tortured and about governments torturing their own citizens deliberately, as a government policy, as a means of extracting information out of them. The whole thing just sort of shocked and horrified me. I mean, I'd not given any thought to that sort of thing before . . . you don't sort of think about it, but I've got three small kids, you know, and didn't think much. . . . Anger, the sheer awfulness of doing such a thing as a deliberate policy. I mean I can understand all . . . cruelty, individual cruelty, on the spur of the moment, under stress, that I can understand to a certain extent, but this is cold blooded [and] deliberate.*

As a result both she and her husband joined and became active members of Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International, which led to involvement in CND and Greenham. Again, one can see the way a political threat is made

personal through a feeling of connection. The information on nuclear waste had more impact because it was conveyed by someone from her own Meeting, who in a sense was a victim himself, as she felt she would be if the problem of waste continued. The information on government torture aroused such intense anger perhaps because there was a resonance with her own parents' escape from barbarous government policy.

What should also be clear from these case studies is that crucial episodes are moral encounters, in that they involve the protagonist in an examination of their beliefs about right and wrong. And crucial episodes bear out Hoffman's description of the connection between empathic affect, moral judgement, and the motivation to act. In each case a causal attribution is made - usually to the government - and there are clearly victims, besides the self or other with whom the self identifies, to whom my respondents feel closely connected and for whom the empathic affects of anger, distress, and guilt are felt. These are past and future victims. Thus, Mary feels guilty about her failure to protect the future of the young people at the anti-nuclear meeting; Margaret feels anger on behalf of victims of torture; and Rosa feels distress for past and future victims of violence. A judgement is made that this is wrong, and there is a subsequent feeling of responsibility and the need to act.

I have summarised what I see as the essential dynamics of a crucial episode in Table 2 (p. 371). I also wish to

highlight the aspects that the disparate experiences described by earlier researchers and my own data have in common. This is perhaps most obvious with Erikson, whose psychodynamic approach has influenced my own, and who points to both the historic and threatening aspects of the events he describes. Moreover, in the cases of Darek, Rosa and Magda, the historic crisis does coincide with their own periods of identity formation, which heightens the feeling of vulnerability and possibility. While James emphasises the ecstatic and joyful aspects of the affective state, it is clear from almost all his examples that this is preceded by an awareness of potential disaster: in one example, the man vividly describes sensations of strangling and choking and the belief that he is near death, which produces feelings of intense vulnerability and often complete despair.

The episodes clearly share many of the features described by Frank and Nash, unsurprisingly in the case of the British, as they occur in a similar population. It is interesting to note, however, both similar personality characteristics - of initiative, independence and concern for others - and similar dynamics in the Guatemalan and Polish activists. However, as I pointed out above, the extent of subsequent activity depends not simply on the intensity of the emotions aroused, but also on the extent to which networks and resources are available, as well as on feelings of efficacy and legitimacy, as Haste suggests.

The main point of difference is with Haste's

presentation of the sequential relation between cognition, affect and action. The data from my activists and other studies suggests that this intense affective experience is not the first point of engagement, but may itself be precipitated by a growing understanding of the threat, and that the shift of awareness is less over the issue itself than over its personal relevance to the individual. The shift results in a growing sense of self as someone who can "make history". However, as I stated at the beginning, the experience of crucial episodes underlines the importance of affect in generating action. I also hope that the case histories provided go some way to explaining that it is the sense of vulnerability of the self, or of others to whom one feels connected, produced by an event that is both historical and threatening and framed in a way that makes it personally relevant, that produces such intense emotions, which in turn generate a need to act.

Lifton sums up the experience more eloquently than I can when he states

> that to touch death and then rejoin the living can be a source of insight and power, and that this is true not only for those exposed to holocaust, or to the death of parent, lover or friend, but also for those who have permited themselves to experience fully the "end of an era", personal or historical.[24]

---

[24] Ibid., p. 245.

Abstract Concerns

Yet six of the activists in my study cannot identify such episodes, and the path to engagement is clearly a much more gradual process of deepening commitment. This takes two different forms: one, where engagement appears to arise from the coincidence of a particular kind of personality and stage in that individual's life cycle with the mobilisation of a popular movement; and another, where it is hope rather than threat that generates the possibility of action. I shall deal with these in turn.

As I showed in Chapter 6, almost all the activists show a certain determination and independence of spirit. It is most marked in four: Rosa (dealt with above) Piotr, Janek, and Diana, all of whom are socially active and engaged from an early age: Piotr and Janek as form leaders and initiators of school activitites, Diana directly in the political issues of animal rights, CND and women. This activity appears to arise from a strong *sense of right and wrong,* as Diana describes it, and a precocious sense of community responsibility. Diana at one point wanted to be a *nurse or a policewoman* because *if you wanted to help the community, and stop wicked people doing wicked things then join the police force.* Piotr refers to his sense of *noblesse oblige* and Janek to organising extra-curricular activities to avoid stagnation in the school.

Although not rebellious in the conventional sense, all were able to stand up to authority when they saw it as

wrong, and thought it important to do so. For example Piotr *tried always to be polite but to say what I think*, and Diana says that *I was very polite about it really. I was fairly bloody minded.* In addition, all were also aware of feeling somewhat different from their classmates. They did not lack friends, but were aware that they had different concerns, and took the world more seriously in some respects than their contemporaries. In Janek and Piotr this sense of difference seems to have contributed to a period of depression and alienation in their mid-teens. Diana, at the same age, had already found like-minded companions at Greenham.

It would appear that, rather than needing an intense, emotional and personal experience to motivate them to engage in collective action, all three, from an early age, had the energy, temperament, awareness and sense of personal responsibility that made them search for issues in which to engage. Engagement in an issue deepened their knowledge and skills and led to increasingly deeper commitment. I shall illustrate this process in detail with Diana.

Diana, after her seal petition, joined national CND as an 11-year old:

> *It was something, like, easily identifiable and you could join. [. . .] I think it was just being able to do something, and then it soon became obvious that, having joined something, that it didn't stop there really. You know, especially with all these people knowing, if they'd seen your pencil case or membership card, and things like that, you immediately, or even if they don't see it, you immediately get into discussions with people, teachers, other pupils, and arguments. It*

quickly escalates. . . . I'm sure I thought at the time, right I've joined CND and that's it.

And her motivation at the start was simply that

it was wrong. It was a reaction to the injustice. I mean, I thought, I felt they were wrong, and therefore I should do something, I'm trying to sort of see it from another point of view . . . of being there rather than now. I think it was that you shouldn't threaten people and you shouldn't be prepared to kill them, and it was a sort of very gut reaction against violence."

Doing something meant starting a youth CND group in the town. This put her in touch with other concerns, such as animal rights - she became a vegetarian when she was twelve - and feminist politics. At the same time she had begun to visit Greenham, which she had seen on TV, the first occasion being when she was twelve for the "Embrace the Base" demonstration in 1982.

Her description of the effect of the demonstration on her and of the way her commitment slowly deepened over the next three years shows that, as in crucial episodes, engagement is both a cognitive and affective process:

I had not seen anything like it before. I was quite bowled over. Totally, I think it took me a few more visits to even be able to identify anything, really. But all I knew was that I wanted to keep going back. Because it captured my imagination, although I can't say why really. I think because, there was this base, you know, these weapons, that I'd sort of thought so much about, and campaigned so much about, and they were actually so close. And it became more and more evident to me as well, the more I went, there were so many things which I knew nothing about . . . the extent of the arms race; and also what

> *positive things were being done about it as well, that I sort of wanted to find out. I didn't like not knowing, really. And that was the real spur to keep going down.*

Here Diana is already actively engaged in CND but, through the powerful metaphor of the action taken by the Greenham women, previously known facts have been given a concrete reality, which produces a strong emotional response and the desire for more knowledge. There are also feelings of self- discovery and the desire for these processes to continue.

> *And the sense of community: I just kept meeting these amazing women, and thinking, God . . . this is brilliant . . . I don't want to go home. [. . .] I felt like I was discovering myself as well, I felt, like, that suddenly it was like a sounding board for me, clearing out a lot of things that I was feeling. It was things like, I was sort of being born in a strange sense. Often I just walked round and just watched what was going on, especially if it were a big day . . . just being somewhere, like that, that felt so incredible. It was sort of the main experience at the very beginning, and then it just evolved as I kept going back, saving up my dinner money and going down at the weekends.*

Note that Diana is not precipitated into action by fear, but, rather, by a sense of something being wrong. *I think I went because nuclear weapons were bad things. They were threatening the world, they were threatening our existence. I didn't have that personal sense of fear.* That is not to say that fear does not play a role in her engagement. She describes her first action at the camp as *terrifying.*

There were two terrifying points: the going through the hole. To this day it's the doing of the hole and going through the hole that still gets my stomach. Once I'm in there, its very different. It's that making the hole and going through it that to this day frightens me. [And secondly,] we were very badly treated by the soldiers at the fence, thrown in barbed wire and being dragged through it, and that was . . . really terrifying. I was in tears by the time I was shoved in the Landrover. They threw me in head first.
L: And how did that make you feel?
D: Well, initially, quite terrified and quite powerless. Then, once we were going along in the Landrover, the women were being very supportive of each other, you know, and we sort of brought each other back. And that was a really, that was a very good experience. So by the time we were sort of lined up in the corridor, having our details taken, we were very sure of ourselves again.

The experience was not only frightening but transforming and empowering. Diana regards fear as an unavoidable part of the action, not as a means of generating excitement - *it's too frightening for me to be excited. I mean, I'm too in awe of what we're up against to get excited before an action* - but as a reminder of the seriousness of what she is doing.

L: What are you feeling when you're making the hole [in the fence]?
D: That was when the fear comes in.
L: Of?
D: I don't know, I've never . . .
L: Of being shot?
D: No. I've never been frightened of being shot, apart from once when an American went wild in front of me with a gun. I think it's a fear of something unknown, really. It's just a fear. And I'm quite glad I've never lost that too because I think it's . . . I've come to the point where I'd think twice about doing an action with somebody who said they're not frightened. I think, well, if you're not frightened then there's probably something wrong, rather than the other way around

around.

Interestingly, engagement produced bad dreams:

> *I occasionally have bad dreams but they're usually not about the world ending, they're usually about the convoys or they're things that I experience or have experienced: . . . being chased by the convoy or being run over by the convoy, or being locked, you know, framed for something I didn't do, or being rounded up. But these haven't been happening for a very very long time.*

The dreams stopped *when I demystified it and I actually got to grips with it, in a sense. Rather than it being this kind of great huge thing that flew by, it became something that you could actually stop.* Thus, fear for Diana is not an emotion that precipitates her into action but part of the lived experience of engagement that keeps the issue salient and grounds her in reality. It is counterbalanced by growing feelings of knowledge, creativity and empowerment.

Greenham also clearly brought together two issues - women and nuclear weapons - that concerned her and allowed her to feel comfortable rather than unusual in expressing them: *it being women-only created a certain amount of the atmosphere, you know, and made camp what it was, really. . . . I felt much less like I was being, you know, obnoxious, or a pain in the neck if I challenged something.* Weekends at the camp led to weeks, and weeks to the decision at sixteen to forgo taking A-levels and going to university in favour of full-time commitment.

What distinguishes this process from the one involving

crucial episodes is that while both beliefs and feelings are involved and can be hard to disentangle - note that Diana both thought and felt nuclear weapons were wrong - it is a slow cumulative process. There is no sudden shift of perspective, and there is an absence of intense feelings of personal vulnerability. Rather, there is a more general concern with right and wrong, and an active interest, from a young age, in public affairs. Issues do not have to be made real for these activists through a close personal connection because they are already curious and concerned about things. Janek and Piotr argue with their fathers about politics. Sources of information differ: Diana learns about issues from the media; Janek and Piotr from reading underground literature. The effect is a growth in knowledge and understanding that pushes them into action when the right historic moment occurs.

Thus for Janek, brought up in a family that valued honesty, it is *the lying* that concerns him. He is *shocked* and *irritated* when he first discovers, on a visit to the West, that not only information about damage to the environment but *the whole life, everything that was going on, was censored.* In literature which he enjoyed *there was absolute silence about certain writers. [. . .] Young people were told that they were developing such wonderful . . . they were building socialism, and everything was OK and when I realised it was lies, that made me especially angry.*

The space between what was said and what was going on in reality was particularly noticable on his return to a

politically stagnant Czechoslovakia, after witnessing the birth of Solidarity in Poland in the summer of 1980. It was *the extra drop* in a *glass full to the brink. [. . .] In history, it is like that, that certain periods come and then. . .* Janek, encouraged and inspired by what was happening in Poland, felt able to act himself within his own setting of student politics.

Both Piotr and Janek felt at their most despairing when the possibility of action was removed: Piotr, having been deeply involved in Student Solidarity (NZS), was both surprised and deeply upset by the imposition of martial law.

> *It was something really terrible in my life. . . . [I] never thought about the possibility of such martial Law or things of that kind, but I was so engaged in this activity [. . . and] in one day I lost everything. [. . .] I was very unhappy then. And it was really, I needed, it needed some days and weeks to recover, I couldn't find what to do.*

Janek, likewise, felt *frustrated, very angry, and helpless.* Both immediately searched for some kind of underground activity in which to involve themselves. However, sustaining an underground trade union had little direct relevance to their own lives, and it was the creation and growth of WiP, three years later, in which they were instrumental, that allowed them to act directly on the issues that concerned them. For Janek this meant environmental issues, for Piotr it was the issues that are central to his Catholic faith: freedom, peace, and human dignity. Piotr is clear that *the real reason of my public*

activity was not that I was interested in politics. It was always . . . somehow the moral mechanism of doing things, it was the main motor.

In summary, these activists did not feel compelled into action through a feeling of personal vulnerability or connection to someone else who was threatened; nor did they express strong feelings of empathic concern. Rather, they appeared actively to search out ways to express and promote the values and issues that have preoccupied them for most of their lives. Not surprisingly, they were initiators of actions. This latter distinction between these two groups is not necessarily clear cut. Rosa, Mary and Darek were also initiators but, in their cases, after a process begun by a crucial episode.

Inhibited by Fear

With the three remaining Guatemalans - Pedro, Christina and Francisco - the process is different again. They act in order to deal with a problem affecting them or their families directly, but it is a gradual and cumulative process and there are no crucial episodes. In contrast to those who have crucial episodes, they are not motivated to act at the point at which they are most threatened and vulnerable. These activists, as indigenous people from the Quiche region, have grown up and lived in an atmosphere of more or less permanent threat and vulnerability, which they

regard as normal. They had become aware, in the early 1980s, of the penalty paid by anyone engaged even in the most benign forms of social organisation, let alone any form of overtly political activity. Rosa's courage in acting in this situation is exceptional and may be related to the degree of initiative she had to take as a child, and the strong connection and therefore responsibility that she felt for the catechist and his work.

The other Guatemalans, although having had the independence and initiative to educate themselves and find work, had no such connections to social or political action, and it was the opening of the political space and the growth of hope, rather than fear, that allowed for the possibility of action. This is best illustrated by looking at **Pedro.**

On escaping his military service, he returned to his small business on the coast. He *felt a different person: I thought differently, I was very macho, I was very superior.* However, he had begun *to buy books, very simple books, but through these books I began to re-educate myself.* The books were the Bible and human relations books, and through their influence he joined a young people's church group, his first experience of constructive social activity. When the army came to his community to start the civil patrols (PACs) with *gifts of maize, beans, powdered milk, giving sweets to the children,* promising *that a new stage was going to start,* Pedro wanted to believe them. *I thought that once they created the patrols that the violence would end, but it was just the opposite.*

The patrols made them even more vulnerable to arbitrary violence. Two occasions stay vividly in Pedro's mind: one was when

> *three villages met together, and the soldiers arrived, and the man came with the soldiers who had his face covered, and he said, this person is a subversive, this person is a subversive, this person is a subversive. Well, right in front of me they took out four patrollers, and I was very scared, because I thought that this man who had his face covered, I thought he was going to point me out as well as a subversive, but thanks to God he didn't point me out. Well, the soldiers believed this man with the covered face, they started to tie the guys up with this rope and they carried them off, and they said if it's proved that these men are guerillas, we are going to kill them, and they took them away. That time when I saw it myself, these patrollers, they tortured them, they asked them a lot of questions, they let them go after a week, but they were beaten, when they returned they were bleeding, they were still bleeding, that's what I saw, but in all the villages that . . . in the high plains there were a lot of patrollers who weren't freed by their soldiers . . .*

Another incident occurred in his district when he was working on the coast and paying someone to take his place:

> *The soldiers said they had captured some guerillas, that these men, they were peasants too, they were our brothers, they were innocent men, these people they didn't find a single arm on them - weapon - but the soldiers obliged the peasants to kill these people, their own brothers, with sticks, and the peasants were scared, they were frightened of killing their own brothers because they knew them, they knew that they were their brothers, so they were scared of killing them with sticks, but the soldiers, when they came, when they saw that the peasants were scared, they said, right, if you are not brave enough to kill these guerillas, we will kill you first, before the other men. So the peasants had to kill them, they killed, but through fear, because otherwise they were going to be killed themselves.*

These incidents distressed and frightened Pedro but they did not at the time make him feel he must take action against the patrols. On the contrary, when I asked what he would have done had he been at his village at the time of this killing he thinks he is likely to have behaved in the same way: *through fear you have to kill, because if you don't kill, well, they will kill you first.* Survival in these times had to depend on a degree of numbing to the atrocities taking place around one.

However, with the election of a civilian president at the end of 1985, the repressive political atmosphere eased slightly and rumours began to circulate that the PACs were voluntary. It was at this point that Pedro and his fellow patrollers petitioned the military command in their district to allow them only to patrol at night and leave them daytime to work in their fields. This was met with a refusal and the usual accusations of subversion. However, a year later, hearing that another village had given up patrolling completely, Pedro and some friends first enquired how they had done it and then set the same process in motion in their own community. This was to go to Amilcar Mendez, a local schoolteacher, and with his assistance write out a declaration based on their constitutional rights, and to send this directly to the President, Minister of Defence and Human Rights Procurator. The second stage was, as a community, to act on their rights, stop patrolling and ignore the threats and bullying of local military

commanders. Pedro clearly took the initiative in these processes, organising community meetings, learning and then teaching others the relevant parts of the constitution. Thus it was natural, when a number of non-patrolling communities decided to get together and form an organisation to represent their interests, that Pedro was made vice-president.

In this position it was no longer a question of improving his own life situation by not having to patrol, but of actually endangering his life by taking the human rights message to other communities. Moreover, the more effective he was, the greater the danger. However, by this stage he felt confident and motivated enough to cope with both current and remembered fears in a different manner.

This whole process took place over three years, during which Pedro was drawing on his natural capacity for taking initiative, his bilingual skills and literacy. He was also re-examining the meaning of the horrifying experiences he and his people had been through. Numbing was no longer necessary and, with hindsight, the emotional content of these remembered incidents took on a new meaning that provided justification and motivation for his current actions. Thus Pedro talked about the feelings he had now about murder of the peasants described above:

> *Two things one can feel: one is to feel frightened to see that they've killed friends of yours, that's a possible feeling. The other is the revitalisation, that you have to do something about this, you have to get vengeance for what's happened. This incident is what most pushed me to*

do the work that I now do. In a pacific way, but it's still vengeance. It's still making sure that these people aren't forgotten. . . . I felt angry in that this wasn't the only thing they'd done. They'd raped women, burned houses.

I would suggest that the fear was overwhelming and inhibiting at the time of the incident, and that it is in remembering this fear, in the context of my asking him about motivation, that the revitalising emotions of vengeance and anger occur. What is more, the act of remembering and recounting, not just to me but others requiring testimony, helped to create the narrative structures that made sense of the fear, gave it personal meaning and historical significance and help Pedro to habituate to it. Pedro could now place his personal experience in its historic context, and recognise that he was part of history and had a significant role in creating it. As with other activists there is the emergence of a historic self.

There are also feelings of empathy and compassion:

I grew up in a family where the father was extremely poor, extremely simple. I worked all my life on these <u>fincas</u>, on the plantations like all the campesinos do, so I know how the people live, I know what it's like to be a widow, and of the suffering of orphans.

He partly attributes this to his earlier Bible reading.

Compassion is the main thing it gives you. For example, it says in the Bible: "love is stronger than fear". And I think that it's very effective. I think that it's true, if you have a very large love then the fear disappears. I think that's

what we all work and use as leaders in the groups we work in.

Christina goes through a similar process of living through the violence with no desire to act. On the contrary, her main concern is to stay out of it. She is very distressed when she sees the damage it has done to her family when she returns home, but it is only when she hears from others of the concrete possibility of action that she takes the initiative to try and stop the patrols in her village. The immediate motivation is the difficulty that her sick brother was having in patrolling, although, with hindsight, she feels that even without family involvement she would have got involved in the issue:

I would say, although, even if I hadn't suffered this personal familial problem, I would have seen it in other communities. I would have analysed that what was going as a whole was violating what we are as persons. You know, I participated in courses, and I was working with the government, and anyone who works for the government, well, they know that they're exploited. And it's not the question of "oh well, I organised just because of these reasons, because of my familial reasons", I think I would have done it anyway.

However, looking back, she sees her memory of her own and her family's experience of the violence as a primary motivation.

As with Pedro, the knowledge and experience she has accumulated push her into a leadership position, and thus a position of greater danger and vulnerability, which she acknowledges as difficult: *right at the start I was never*

scared, never, but when the army arrived, to put the pressure on, afterwards, and threaten people, yes, I did get scared. I thought, somebody could point me out as somebody, one of the people who gave advice to others. She has bad dreams: *I've dreamt that I'm walking along and somebody's running after me. I've dreamt that there are bullets coming after me. In my dreams I've always escaped, nothing actually happens to me, but I do wake up scared, feeling nervous.*

She feels unsafe in her village, but she still persists: *I start thinking, well, if this is going to happen to me, then there is nothing I can do about it because, anyway, yes, in any case, we all have to die.* And she considers it worth the risk: *it has very great value. The value is that the people have courage in the struggle, that they don't lose hope. This is the value.* The only conflict is her responsibility for her family. Thus, in the process of becoming fully engaged, fear is no longer paralysing, but something that must be confronted and lived with, and her family have shifted from being part of her motivation to act to becoming part of the constraints on action

> *I just really had this will, and I felt that I wanted to start giving full-time all the little I knew about what was going on with the civil patrols in the community. I made the decision that I would work full-time for them, but always thinking that with the problems in my family, there would be times that I would have to have that as a priority.*

Francisco is perhaps the activist with the least

personal initiative in the study, at least in the early stages of his involvement. He, like Pedro and Christina, has put up with the terror, and gave a graphic description of how terror prevented him and his family from even investigating what happened to his father (see Chapter 6). He became involved in CERJ in order to improve his own situation, and was then offered a job. This provided him with interesting work helping others - through meeting all those who came to the office - and, perhaps most significantly, it also provided a substitute father in the form of Mendez. Sadly, it is possible that his involvement in CERJ contributed to the assassination of his mother. In spite of this and the continuing threats to other members of his family, Francisco became more deeply engaged in human rights work, becoming an organiser for the *campesino* trade union. Thus, like the others, he makes a transition from engagement to serve personal interests to a sense of public responsibility that increases his risk. The process of engagement itself has in all three cases enabled the respondents to confront fear.

I have summarised this third process diagramatically (see Table 3, p. 372) to contrast it with that occurring in crucial episodes, and to show clearly the importance of historical and political context, particularly the role of repression, in determining whether or not action occurs. Many of the elements that occur in a crucial episode are also involved in this process. There is a similar generalisation from action taken on the behalf of self to

acting for others. Feelings of anger, empathy and compassion are mobilising. The significant difference is not simply that the process takes longer but that, because of the already present level of terror, it is not an increased sense of personal vulnerability that breaks down numbing. Rather, it is only with a decrease in terror, and the growth of hope, that personal vulnerability is decreased and action becomes possible. Numbing only seems to come to an end when, through action, which includes the constructing of narratives in the form of testimony and memorials, the individual has developed the resources to cope with the feelings produced by earlier traumas. These emotions can then provide the "revitalising" energy for further action on behalf of others. And by this time there is an increase in personal efficacy that enables the individual to cope with their increased vulnerability to danger

In conclusion, I have, through the experiences of my respondents, illustrated three different processes through which the individual can become engaged in collective action. All three involve both affective and cognitive processes and all three depend on the interplay of historical events with the individual's own life circumstances.

For the majority of my respondents, some form of personal involvement with an issue is combined with a growing awareness of its historic significance and the feeling of empathic concern for others. Within this group there are two different responses to fear. One is where

fear of imagined events stimulates the need to act through a breakdown of numbing. In this case, feelings of intense personal vulnerability are mobilising. For others living with chronic and overwhelming terror, fear leads to numbing as a method of coping, and action is only possible when repression and the resultant feelings of vulnerability decrease. For a minority, for whom action on social issues has begun at an early age, feelings of personal vulnerability do not play a significant role in the initial engagement and a personal connection with the issue is not necessary. However, the issues which mobilise them fully are ones that have personal meaning, and a realistic awareness of the dangers of both the issue and action taken to confront it can be part of what keeps it salient.

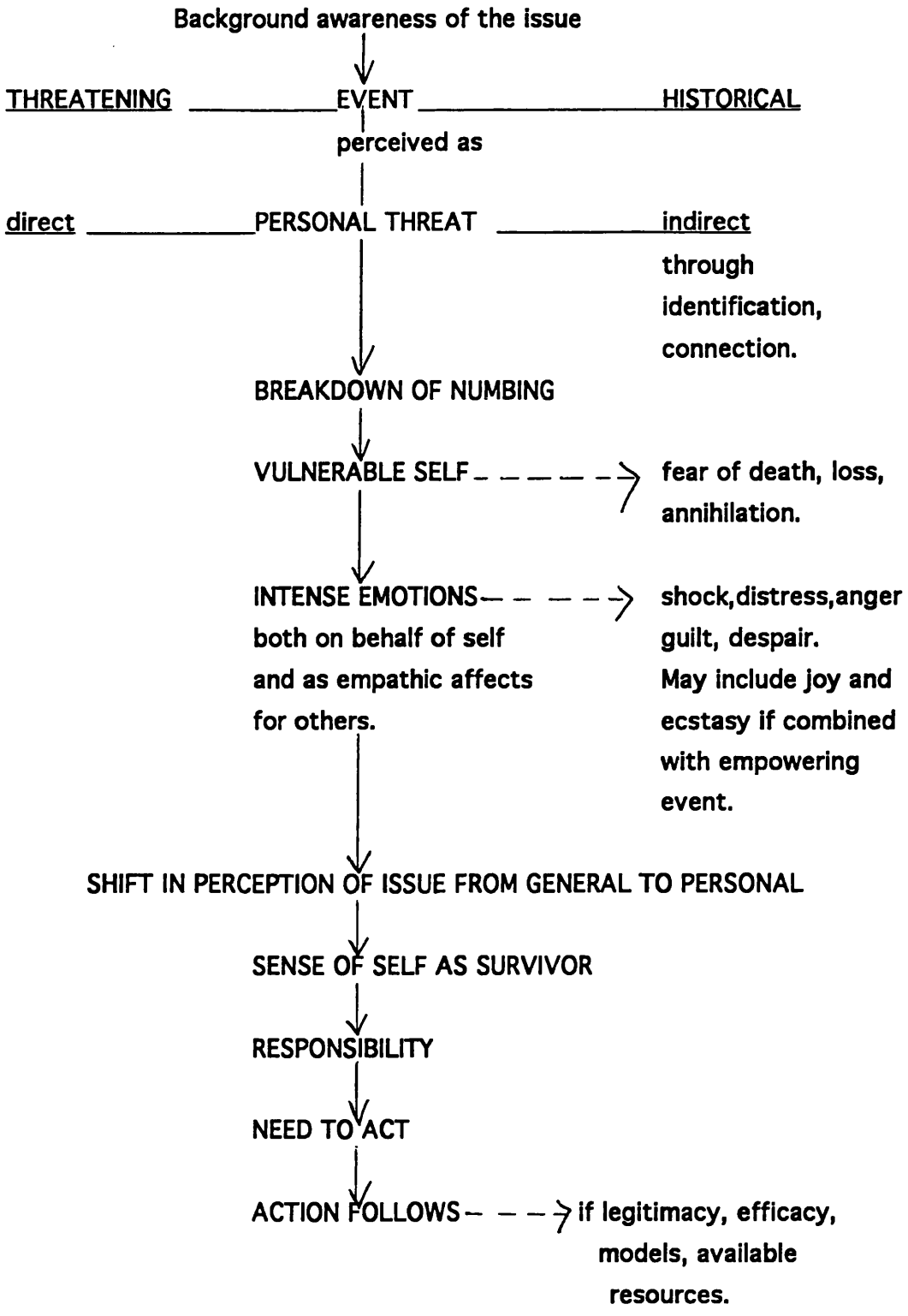


Table 2

Process of Engagement in Crucial Episodes

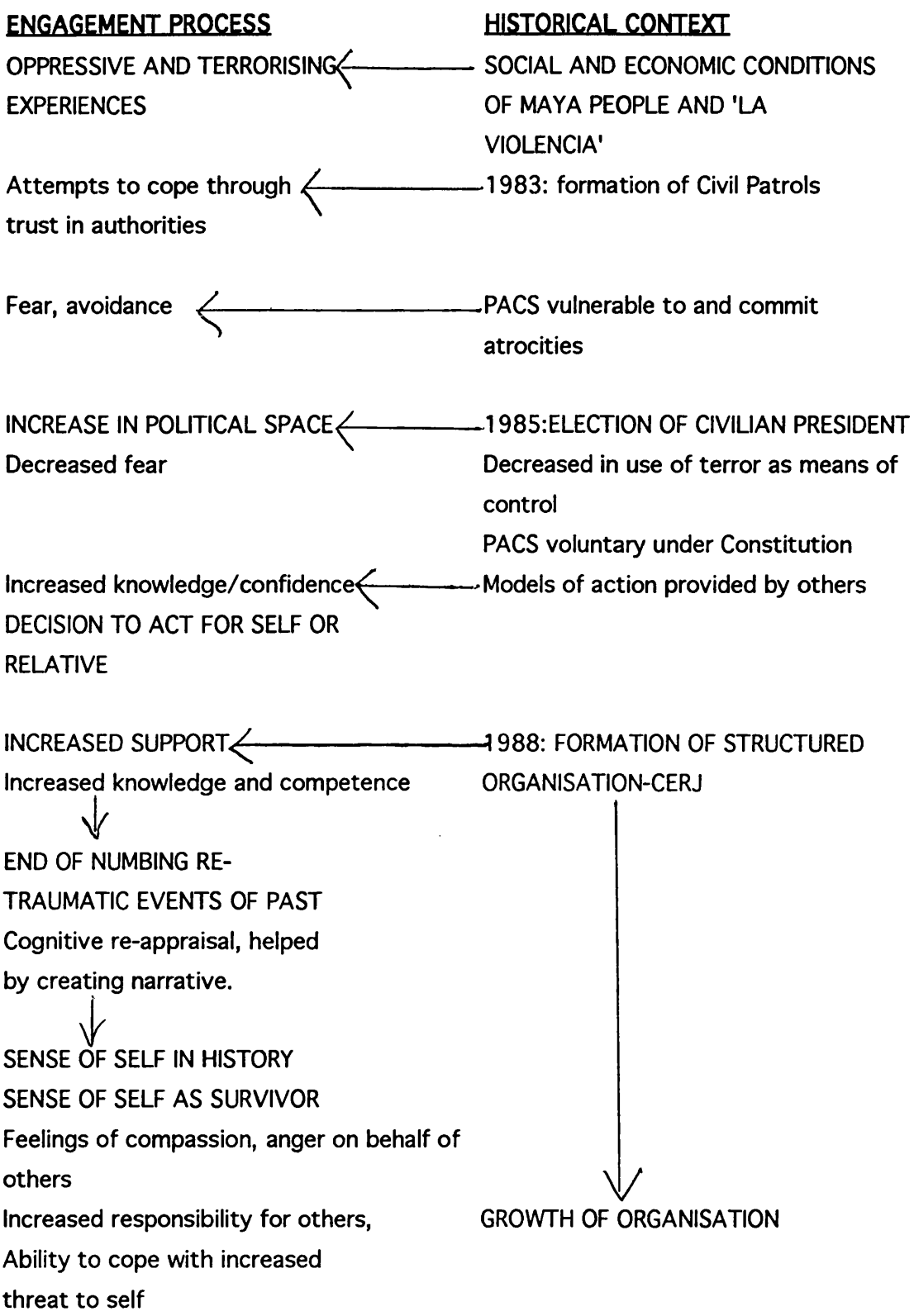


Table 3

Gradual Engagement Process

CHAPTER 8
THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

> Surviving holocaust makes one vulnerable to deformations, dislocations, and imaginative impediments. The hard-won knowledge of death that both defines and plagues one tends to be fragmentary at best and half articulate, yet is precious in the extreme. It takes shape from the survivor's struggle to grasp his or her experience of death immersion and render it significant. Only by such a formulation can the survivor cease to be immobilized by the death imprint, by death guilt, and by psychic numbing. That is, in struggling to reorder one's own experience, one can contribute to the general historical reordering so widely craved. And these psychological emanations - from past holocausts and their survivors, from anticipated holocausts and their imagined survivors - reach everyone. The painful wisdom of the survivor can, at least potentially, become universal wisdom.
>
> Robert Lifton, "The Survivor as Creator"[1]

In this chapter I am interested in exploring the way in which childhood trauma might contribute to political engagement. The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, there is the view that activists are psychopathological deviants acting out their personal problems on society at large. Lasswell viewed political action as the expression of repressed unconscious urges, rationalised and displaced from the private to the public world. A recent study by Duncan of a civil rights activist, in which his radical activism is

---

[1] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Future of Immortality and Other Essays for a Nuclear Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), p. 24.

explained away as an expression of oedipal and oral rage and as a defence against depression, demonstrates that this pathological interpretation of political action is alive and well.[2]

Meanwhile, the literature on empathy suggests that those abused in childhood are less likely to be empathic, or to show pro-social behaviour. And the socialisation literature suggests that children from families with a high degree of overt conflict are less likely to be active. In addition, a large body of literature on the effects of childhood abuse shows that abused children are likely to grow up with low self-esteem and a low sense of personal efficacy. All of these factors taken together might suggest that those exposed to trauma in childhood are less likely to become engaged in non-violent action.

How, then, does one make sense of the fact that, as the reader will have noticed in Chapter 6, many of my respondents in this study have suffered from various forms of traumatic experience in their pre-activist lives: prolonged illness; the loss of parents through death or separation; parental violence and alcoholism; physical or sexual abuse; or periods of intense alienation. In addition, the Guatemalans in particular lived through a period of horrific violence of which they and their communities were the main targets. Such experiences might be in keeping with a psychopathological explanation of

---

[2] Martha Duncan, "Only the Marlboro Man: a Psychological Study of a Political Agitator", *Political Psychology* 8, 2, pp. 165--190.

activism. My respondents could be seen to be acting out the repressed pain of childhood hurts. The problem is that, firstly, there does not appear to be any repression. The respondents are quite open to discussing these events and the pain that they caused. Secondly, in spite of abuse, it is a capacity for empathy that marks many of them out, and all of them have a strong sense of both personal and political efficacy. Thirdly, none of them could be described as socially deviant. That is not to say that their activity as protestors may not be perceived as deviant by some sections of their own societies, but activism is not an expression of "dropping out". Rather, it is an expression of social concern and engagement, and, as can be seen from the biographies in Appendix 1, political engagement of this kind, in all three countries, tends to produce upward rather than downward mobility.

What I want to do in this chapter, through looking in detail at one activist's life, is to show how traumatic experiences in childhood can be significant in the process of engagement, but not through the pathological mechanism of repression and displacement suggested by Lasswell. Rather, it is the awareness of these experiences and the development of methods to cope with them, that enhanced my respondent's capacity for empathy and her sense of efficacy, which in turn, contributed to the possibility of action. The narrative also demonstrates how a sense of personal efficacy can become converted to political efficacy.

Others besides Lasswell have noted the significance of traumatic experiences in the process of engagement with action or creative work. Frank and Nash note that some of the respondents in their study had what they called "sensitising experiences" prior to the crucial episode that precipitated engagement. Such experiences included serious illness, divorce, deaths or injury in the immediate family, and psychotherapy.[3] They also suggest that "a childhood containing sources of conflict and tension might also heighten a person's sensitivity to environmental threats and make him especially attuned to the unpleasant features of conflict."[4]

Lifton suggests that all of us, from birth onwards, are vulnerable to what he calls "death equivalents", that is, to experiences of "separation, disintegration, and stasis" that "serve as psychic precursors and models for later feelings about actual death."[5] One response to such experiences is psychic numbing (described in Chapter 7). The other is a process of "confrontation", and subsequent "reordering and renewal", that can produce a "deepened general awareness" of the dangers we all face and a desire to act upon them. Awareness "includes the ability to anticipate and realise danger, on the one hand, and the capacity for knowledge and

---

[3] Frank, Jerome D. and Nash, Earl H., "Commitment to Peace Work: A Preliminary Study of Determinants and Sustainers of Behaviour Change", *American Journal Of OrthoPsychiatry* 35 (1965), p. 117.

[4] Ibid., p. 117.

[5] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. 53.

transcendent feeling, on the other. . . . Imaginative access to death in its various psychic manifestations is necessary for vitality and vision." The process is historically rooted, looking inward at the self and outward to the environment in which the individual lives.[6] What Lifton is saying is that the ability to confront one's personal hurts increases one's sensitivity towards, and ability to challenge, the historical threats to one's own people and the planet. I suggest that this is because the process of confrontation with one's own hurts increases one's capacity for empathy and connection.

The psychiatrist Miller makes a similar point. Her writings examine the role of childhood trauma in producing both creativity and destructiveness. Firstly, through her detailed psychobiographical work on artists such as Picasso and dictators such as Hitler and Stalin, she extends the notion of childhood trauma, pointing out that the pedagogical approach in child rearing, with its emphasis on obedience and duty and the suppression of the child's own feelings, is as damaging as overt child abuse:

> Child abuse is still sanctioned - indeed, held in high regard - in our society as long as it is defined as child rearing. It is a tragic fact that parents beat their children in order to escape the emotions stemming from how they were treated by their own parents.[7]

---

[6] Ibid., pp. 391--394.

[7] Alice Miller, *The Untouched Key: Tracing Childhood Trauma in Creativity and Destructiveness* (London: Virago, 1990).

She argues that much child rearing to date has been based on the need to stamp out in one's children what has been scorned and eradicated in oneself. And, like Lasswell, she makes a direct connection between these repressed experiences and politics, but, in contrast to him, argues that these repressed feelings do not manifest themselves as rebellion against authority but as obedience to it: the result is the destructive politics of fascism and totalitarianism and the endorsement of nuclear weapons as a means of defence.[8] She explains this in vivid metaphorical terms by referring to Abraham's preparedness to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command. She points to the fact that "In all portrayals of this scene that I found, Abraham's face or entire torso is turned away from his son and directed upward. Only his hands are occupied with the sacrifice. . . . The son, an adult at the peak of manhood, is simply lying there quietly waiting to be murdered by his father . . . in not a single one is he rebellious." This, she believes, is a "symbolic representation of our situation. Inexorably, weapons are being produced for the obvious purpose of destroying the next generation." And those who are involved "do not see what their hands are doing, and they devote their entire attention to fulfilling expectations from above, at the same time ignoring their feelings", which "they learned to deny as children". What

---

[8] Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: The Roots of Violence in Child-Rearing,* (London: Virago, 1987)

is needed, therefore, is for Isaac to become "aware", confronting both his own feelings and those of his father.[9]

The possibility of awareness and of dealing with trauma creatively exists if there is any loving and attentive presence in childhood, if "at least once in their life they come into contact with a person who knows without any doubt that the environment, not the helpless, battered child, is at fault."[10] It is "the absence or presence of a witness in childhood" which "determines whether a mistreated child will become a despot who turns his repressed feelings of helplessness against others or an artist who can tell about his or her suffering,"[11], and the artist clearly includes the creative political activist. It is important to add that she does not regard traumatic experiences as in any way necessary in the genesis of creativity or political action.

> People whose integrity has not been damaged in childhood, who were protected, respected, and treated with honesty by their parents, will be - both in their youth and adulthood - intelligent, responsive, empathic, and highly sensitive. They will take pleasure in life and will not feel any need to kill or even hurt others or themselves. They will use their power to defend themselves but not to attack others. They will not be able to do otherwise than to respect and protect those weaker than themselves . . . because it is this knowledge (and not the experience of cruelty) that has been stored up inside them from the beginning.

---

[9] Ibid., pp. 138--145.

[10] Ibid., pp. 168--169.

[11] Ibid., p. 60.

I want to illustrate, by first looking in detail at Anna's life, the processes identified by Lifton and Miller, in which awareness of, and confrontation with, one's own childhood trauma can lead to creative renewal. In detailing Anna's story I shall show how an awareness of her own abuse creates an empathic concern for the abuse of others. Empathy creates a need to act. Action occurs when resources are available and this enhances Anna's sense of personal efficacy. As Anna gains the confidence to act in an increasingly public sphere, personal efficacy becomes political efficacy and makes further action more likely.

At the time of my interviews with Anna she had just finished a year at a mature students college and was spending part of her summer as warden of the Friends' Meeting House in the town neighbouring the missile base. She was taking part in incursions into the base and in actions against the cruise missile convoy. In between she was filling in an application form to Oxford University. She came across as a warm and energetic woman, self-sufficient, clear about her goals, yet at the same time she was both nervous and surprised at the fact that she really was about to do something others had told her would be impossible, namely, go to Oxford. During the interview, although frequently concerned that she was not able to express her ideas and feelings as clearly as she wished, and that she might sound *mundane* or incoherent, she was articulate and thoughtful. Lasswell, in discussing the pacifist A, states the importance of the fact that all

hostility towards his father is barred from conciousness.[12] Yet Anna, perhaps one of the most traumatised individuals in my study, was completely open about her experiences with her family and the hostile feelings they produced.

I have described in Chapter 6 the horrifying sexual abuse that Anna suffered from her father, culminating in rape, pregnancy and a miscarriage at the age of twelve; how her strong sense of herself as a survivor enabled her to escape, and how the rest of her childhood was spent in a children's home. Her initial reaction to such trauma was numbing: for the first two years in the home she *blanked out* her earlier childhood experiences. When she did begin to acknowledge and gain an insight into what had happened to her:

> *my whole life exploded . . . I was just totally out of control. . . . It wouldn't have been so bad if it was anger that I could have directed, but I didn't feel I could direct it, so I directed it inwards. And I guess I just hated myself, and I couldn't explain that but I kind of blamed myself for what happened.*

This is the beginning of confrontation and the end of numbing. Fortunately, in spite of these feelings of self-destructiveness, the strong positive relationships that she formed with both her keyworkers provided enough stability and security to enable her to explore her own experiences without completely catastrophic consequences. She states that, subconciously, she knew that she *could push and push*

---

[12] Harold Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 97--99.

and push. And I did. These were the first of a series of helping witnesses identified as important by Miller in protecting children from the most destructive effects of abuse.

What is apparent is that her ability to recognise her own anger at *other people making choices and decisions for me about my life* increased her sensitivity to the anger of others, and formed the beginnings of re-ordering, a turning outwards from the self, and subsequent politicisation. It was a very troubled period for the children's home. Having been bullied herself, she found the bullying of other children intolerable and started *getting angry about the way people were treated, and just wanting to do something about it.* Here we have a clear demonstration of the way awareness, rather than the repression of personal traumas, can contribute to the growth of empathy, which in the right circumstances can lead to action and an increased sense of efficacy: Anna's confrontation with her own victimhood resulted in an empathic concern for those she perceived as victims in her own environment and in a desire to act. Her previous experiences of the ineffectiveness of some forms of action, and her contact with a keyworker, who was himself a trade union organiser, gave her resources that facilitated more effective action. In this case Anna played a leading role in the creation of an organisation for the rights of childen in care, empowering herself and others and increasing her sense of political efficacy.

It was in the period after leaving the children's home that she had her first crucial episode. This occurred in the early summer of 1982, with the sinking of the HMS Sheffield during the Falklands War. Anna can vividly recall the moment that she heard about it:

> *I saw a newsflash. It was afternoon, and it was funny, because this insurance guy had come round and I'd stupidly let him in, so we both sat down and watched it, and he was as frightened as I was . . . just absolute fear and panic that they'd done it, they were killing people, that it wasn't going to end there, it just felt totally out of control. . . .*

The elements of a crucial episode can be clearly identified. Anna's feelings of fear and *horror* at the *barbarism* and futility of people dying over some islands were exacerbated and personalised by anxiety that two of her friends from the children's home, who were in the Navy, might have gone down with the ship. She herself had contemplated joining the forces: thus, the feelings of personal vulnerability to a historically threatening event are produced by connection and identification with known potential victims. At the same time, Anna is well aware of the implications of the event: this was possibly a war that was not going to stop. One can also sense a feeling of guilt, both at not sharing the situation and surviving it, and at not having done something to prevent it.

The event appears to resonate with traumatic incidents from her childhood. I would suggest that the feelings of anger, fear and guilt aroused by the sinking of the HMS Sheffield resonate with memories and feelings from her own

previous struggles for survival, and are thus intensified. Anna uses the same language of **lack of control** to describe both the sinking of the HMS Sheffield and her childhood reaction to her own abuse. Moreover, through recognising in her friends on the HMS Sheffield the self she might have been, her own awareness of the current problem is heightened, as is her desire to act.

There is a similar sequence to the one that occurred in the children's home: current events, in this case war, resonate with earlier traumas and create empathic concern. But, as Magda's story made clear in Chapter 7, while such events create an "emotional preparedness" for action, whether action follows immediately or not depends on the resources available at the time. It is clear from her history that Anna has already acquired some sense of efficacy and of reponsibility through her experiences in the childrens' home. What she lacks on this occasion is resources. Unlike Mary and Sarah, described in Chapter 7, she is not already part of an activist network and does not know how to find it, nor is there a prescribed role available, as there was for Rosa.

In fact, this is a difficult period of her life: she is isolated, and taking drugs. Yet some sense of political efficacy is evident. Shortly after this event she moved into a therapeutic community, from where she organised a coach to Greenham for the "Embrace the Base" action and, like Diana, found the occasion profoundly moving:

It was just incredible, I've just never been in anything that big before. . . . It just got to me . . . I can remember feeling like I was going to burst into tears a number of times. It was quite frightening, the feeling was so intense. I think from that point on I couldn't get it out of my system at all.

Again, it is possible to identify the key elements of a crucial episode here: participation in a historic event - it was surely clear to Anna as she stood decorating the fence of a potential nuclear weapons facility with 30,000 others that she was making history. She was also personally confronting the symbol of her worst fear - sudden death resulting from nuclear war - that had terrified her since childhood. In this case, however, the feeling of threat and vulnerability is combined with a feeling of empowerment, producing a mixture of intense emotions, including happiness and tears. She did not want to leave, yet at that point joining the encampment did not appear to be an option; she knew she was anti-war but felt completely ignorant.

Yet the interesting thing is that she did act, not in an overtly political way, yet the consequences of her actions were such as to change her environment so that political action was now possible. By enrolling at a college of further education she put herself in touch with friends and resources, particularly a lecturer who helped her get rid of her addiction. She must have been both competent and popular, as she was elected president of the students' union. One can assume that it was her growing sense of confidence and political understanding that made it

possible for her to act on the feelings aroused a year earlier, and start visiting Greenham regularly. She moved down permanently in the late summer of 1984, after obtaining her O-levels.

This decision to become a full-time peace activist was a complex one. One reason was that Greenham offered a vital and challenging alternative to the potential stagnation of her current situation.

> *I just can't bear standing still, not feeling like I'm doing anything . . . achieving anything. . . . I just felt like I was banging my head against a brick wall. All I could see was getting my O-levels, taking some A-levels, and being stuck in this council flat, like, forever.*

The apparent confidence, autonomy and purposefulness of the Greenham women appeared admirable, as did Greenham's anti-authoritarian stance. Anna felt inclined to *lean towards any kind of movement that was challenging.* There was also *the way they talked . . . it was new to me. I had never sat down in a group and it had been that lively.*

However, Anna is quite clear that the main attraction of Greenham was *the issue,* the chance to directly oppose nuclear weapons. My view is that living there meant that, as on her first visit, she could confront her *absolute terror* of death itself, in particular nuclear war: *I'm terrified by the thought of nuclear war. I'm terrified to a point, where, if I wasn't doing anything . . . I think almost . . . the urgency that I felt with having to do something was because the fear paralysed me if I didn't.*

When we talked about this in more detail it emerged that in fact her fear was of being

> *stopped before my time. . . . I'm absolutely terrified of, like, a sudden death. I hate sudden things. I could bear, I could cope with being told I'd got six months to live. I could cope with that totally, but I couldn't cope with a heart attack. I can't cope with things that are sudden. I like being able to work them out and to come to terms with it.*

Nuclear war is particularly frightening because *it's sudden, it's immediate, there's no way of stopping it, once it's started, there's no way of putting it right.* And I would suggest, this fear of nuclear death resonates with her acknowledged fear of sudden death at the hands of her father as a small child. Direct action provided the opportunity to confront her fear in a concrete, autonomous and personal way, and action, as before, led to a growing sense of empowerment and political efficacy:

> *I don't think I've experienced anything like that first action, just going in and feeling, just that total empowerment of being able to . . . to do something, and it felt like I was actually <u>doing</u> something, I was letting people know how I felt, and I was just facing it head on, I was going in there and <u>seeing</u>, for myself.*

Through Anna's constant direct actions and initiatives while she was at the camp, one could say that she "put the fear right" by literally burrowing into the heart of it and exposing its inner workings. In exposing a hidden bunker,

for example, she challenged what she describes as the nuclear thinkers *farcical vision* of the future - the belief that *this elite could survive in this underground bunker [when] we wouldn't last five minutes* - by working to ensure her own and others' continuity.

In fact, there appear to be two parallel processes going on. One process is a suppression of immediate risks: she appears unperturbed by the real and immediate threat of being shot by soldiers, caught by dogs or imprisoned under the Official Secrets Act. Although she acknowledges, in both discussion and her writings, anxiety at the prospect of a long prison sentence, this anxiety does not have the same quality as her acknowledgment of the larger threat to the planet. In a similar manner to Diana, Anna describes how

> *I'm always frightened when I go in there [Aldermaston (AWRE)]. There is always a moment when I'm going through the fence that I'm frightened, frightened of what's inside, . . . not frightened of what's actually going to happen to me while I'm in there but frightened of . . . like, the meaning of it all.*[My emphasis.]

It is important to understand that this kind of fear is not a deterrent. If anything, Anna feels the fear is greater now than in the past, as is her sense of empowerment. Living and acting at the site of her fears maintains their saliency, keeps her connected to the issue and increases both the need and the ability to act.

This process of confrontation transformed Anna. Greenham allowed her to realise her own strength and

creativity and gave her the *confidence to make decisions for myself, just to say "I don't agree with you". I'd done it in Care but that was against "authority". To say it to anyone, other women, was a new thing for me.* Perhaps most important, it *opened up a world, you know, that I hadn't been a part of,* a world in which

> *the future did have possibilities. . . . To go and find out about things . . . to do things that I found incredibly frightening, I mean I've often felt that, like, fear can totally paralyse me, if I let it, unless I actually tackle it head on: and that bit of Greenham, [. . .] actually going inside a base and being absolutely terrified, but, like, carrying on and just going in. [. . .] That was incredibly empowering, and that's helped me in lots of ways.*

This cycle of confrontation, and subsequent re-ordering of the self, is not a once-only experience, and the periods of confrontation may be with different aspects of the past and self. In the children's home Anna came to terms in some degree with the abuse and oppression she had experienced in her family, and at Greenham with the deep-seated and long-standing fears of annihilation, sparked by her fears that her father might kill her and by an early awareness that the world as a whole was a very unsafe place. Then, during a prison sentence in 1988, another crucial episode occurred which caused her to rethink her whole Greenham experience.

The sentence of four months, for an action taken with a friend two years previously at Aldermaston, was the longest she had received. Although she had no regrets about the action, she acknowledges, in an article written later,

that she felt *shit scared* and miserable at the thought of jeopardising her newly acquired college place. While in prison, she found herself scrubbing floors beside a woman she had last met at the remand assessment centre when she was twelve years old. The longer-term inmates trusted and accepted her as one of themselves, and she found herself drawn back into a sub-culture she thought she had forgotten. It made her *think about a lot of things* and it *re-connected* her to

> *a past that I felt almost, like, I'd had to deny, whilst I'd lived at Greenham. I had a crisis of identity [. . .] because I felt caught between two camps. I felt, like, I belonged to both. Or I think, to some extent, that I belonged to my past one more than I belonged to the Greenham one, and I couldn't identify with Greenham women in prison any more.*

She found herself using *old survival mechanisms*, discovering to her horror that she was a *natural baron*, an expert at exchange and barter; that she could be ruthless and competitive in the 'play to win' sport in the gym; and that, most significant and most distressing, Greenham concepts of non-violence did not work. In order to stand her ground against the bullying of another woman she had to respond in kind, at least in terms of verbal aggression.

Yet, in spite of being "reconnected" to her past, this is not the same Anna who battled her way through a brutal and uncaring childhood. Her *old survival mechanisms* appear to have matured. She has gained an insight that enables her to handle the subtleties of staff bullying. For example, by

deliberately choosing the hardest physical labour (digging - usually reserved as a punishment) she kept fit, increased her wages, and gained respect. Survival also now meant caring for herself and others. She refused the offer of hard drugs, although tempted to *get obliterated,* and although it meant offending the friends who offered it. Her concern was now how, with other women, to do something about the *terrifying* risks of Aids. In fact, the conflicts and stress of this sentence brought her very close to complete breakdown, and she describes a two-week period on leaving prison, when she was hallucinating and unable to handle the company of others, as the most frightening experience of her life.

However, she emerged from this - having cured herself by isolating hersel in her room and catching up on her college work - with a renewed sense of clarity and commitment. She explained how the Greenham rhetoric that women are all the same does not work: not because women in prison have different personalities but because the system is run to *make you different. It is a barbaric, uncaring, ignorant penal system, designed to punish, undermine, humiliate [. . .] and basically destroy the human beings within it. [. . .] I'm so angered by prison and I want to do something about it so badly.*

In this episode the processes of confrontation, re-ordering and renewal identified by Lifton are clearly observed. There is confrontation with negative aspects of the self, and old fears, guilt feelings, and anxieties are

revived. Re-ordering requires a re-examination of these aspects, and renewal results in an increased sense of purpose and responsibility which provides the framework for subsequent action. Anna's new awareness of her own potential for violence in certain situations has not resulted in a rejection of non-violence but in a determination to abolish an environment that makes non-violence impossible. Initially she saw herself doing this through journalism. However, when her college advised her that she could get into Oxford, she determined on an academic career as the best basis for working for penal reform.

Anna is a survivor. Through each experience of loss, devaluation and stagnation, *there's always been a bit of me that wanted to carry on.* The presence of helping witnesses meant that, instead of self-blame and low self-esteem turned outwards into hatred of others, she could acknowledge the hurt done to her, make use of it to generate an empathic connection with others, and, step-by-step, acquire an increasing sense of efficacy and control, a belief in her ability to change both her own life and the lives of others. Lifton argues that, in some sense, we are all survivors,

> not just of our own personal hurts but of the holocausts of the twentieth century, the very real ones of past and current wars, plagues and man-made disasters, and the imagined and anticipated ones from nuclear and chemical war, or ecological devastation.[13]

---

[13] Lifton, *The Future of Immortality,* pp. 231--256.

Anna's experience shows that the way one survives one's personal hurts can radically affect whether one chooses to act on the more public traumas of the world at large. First of all, Anna became aware of what had happened to her, after which her capacity to cope and survive was increasingly turned outwards to embrace others. This case history demonstrates that the processes involved are not the result of the rationalisation and displacement of unconscious affect. Rather than repression there is, because of the presence of helpful witnesses, confrontation with her experiences, and a resultant feeling of strength. Anna's history also illustrates the dialectical relationship between self and environment: she actively seeks out and creates the environment she needs if she is, in turn, to develop both personally and politically.

Moreover, it is not an ahistorical process. The themes that touch Anna are not arbitrary. If the potential threat of annihilation through nuclear weapons underpins the way relationships are conducted at the political level, it is not surprising that violence and brutality contaminate the most intimate relationships. It is not coincidence that Anna's personal experiences sensitised her to the dangers of nuclear devastation and arbitrary authority, or that the themes of personal autonomy and control underlie all her concerns. Her choice of action in a sharing, non-violent, participatory community stands in contrast not just to her own personal experiences of alienation and violence, but to the historical and political reality which the group

challenges: the imagined destructiveness of nuclear war, and the destruction of values and of liberty entailed in the actuality of a nuclear-armed state. These themes of the threat of collective violence and lack of human liberty are the themes of our age. And crucial episodes can be seen as marker stones in the course of an activist's development, indicating a growing awareness of the self in history and history in the self: an awareness that personal struggles and historical-political struggles are intermeshed and cannot be resolved separately.

The resonance between past and present struggles, between self and other, is facilitated by a marked capacity for **empathy**. And it is this fact that lies at the heart of my dispute with Lasswell. However, there is a preliminary point. It will have been noted that Anna's history contradicts the finding, mentioned in Chapter 3, that children who have suffered abuse are likely to be less empathic themselves. Yet Anna is clearly acutely empathic. When someone else is being hurt, it feels as if she were hurt herself: *sometimes it's too extreme . . . like when women at Yellow Gate [part of the camp] would scream at a woman police officer . . . I'd feel so unbearable . . . I just couldn't bear the pain . . . it felt like someone was stabbing me. [. . .] I can feel when someone is hurt. . . .*

Note that she does not identify with the woman police officer, but knows how it feels to have someone shout at you. My suggestion is that, in some situations of abuse and neglect - particularly with the kind of violation that Anna

experienced, where family boundaries are totally lost - one develops an acute sensitivity to the feelings of others, simply to enable survival: the next move needs to be anticipated in case it is a blow. Both parents' moods and needs must be finely judged. Moreover, Anna had to act in some respects as parent to her own mother: a maternal role that itself requires an empathic response.

Anna's empathic capacity would be in keeping with a study by Barnett and McCoy of young college students.[14] Those who rated their distressful childhood experiences as highly distressing scored higher on separate measures of empathy than did those who rated their experiences as relatively less distressing.

Thus, the traumatic experiences of childhood may actually have facilitated the development of a capacity for empathy. And it is the continued salience of this remembered pain that creates an empathic resonance with the pain of others. This is in marked contrast with Lasswell's activists where for example the "love for the downtrodden and for humanity" of Mr. A, the agitator/pacifist, is explained as reactive displacement of his repressed "brother hostility", hence the choice of "fraternal ideaologies". And the hatred of capitalism and militarism is viewed as the

---

[14] M. A. Barnett and S. J. McCoy, "The Relation of Distressful Childhood Experiences and Empathy in College Undergraduates", *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 150, 4 (1989), pp. 417--26.

displacement of a deeply repressed father-hatred on to substitute symbols of authority.[15]

Anna has not repressed her childhood and later experiences. On the contrary, she has clear and vivid memories, is willing to talk quite openly about them, and part of her life's "work" is clearly tied up in making sense of these experiences. The empathic resonance results in an increased sense of connectedness with others. Thus *the other's hurt* becomes Anna's hurt and needs to be resolved in some way.

It is empathy that allows Anna to perceive both sides of an immediate conflict as *victims*. It is not always a pleasant feeling. For example, she describes how a fellow activist *can be putting her case across [in court] and getting stroppy, and I can suddenly feel incredibly uncomfortable . . . because I can see this obnoxious magistrate looking quite pained, and I want to kick myself.* The feeling makes her *incredibly angry*, but it also underlies her insistence on non-violence and the need for dialogue. Empathy, by connecting her to how the magistrate or policewoman is feeling, produces the need to take care of those feelings as well as her own, and to try to avoid hurt.

Empathy does not protect against fear. On the contrary, Anna could be described as being "anxiously immersed in death imagery", to use Lifton's expression. Not only has she been frightened all her life, but she deliberately acts in a way that keeps her fears salient, and

---

[15] Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*, pp. 78--104

thus increases her need to act. This suggests that the relationship between issue salience and anti-nuclear activism is an interactive one.

What empathy does protect against is "pychic numbing". In Anna's case, she can feel and confront the possibility of nuclear war because the salience of her prior experiences allows a real connection to be made with its potential victims, including herself. I should emphasise, however, that the presence of empathy and absence of numbing are not enough in themselves. As explained above, action depends also on the availability of other resources and on a sense of personal efficacy. Haste argues that activism is not a result of overcoming various psychological blocks but "a style of coping which depends on a combination of elements."[16] In Anna's case, where that combination of elements is missing and action is not possible, her empathic sensitivity can be seen to have damaging consequences. Her initial reaction when she saw other children being hurt was to be *quite out of control* and to damage herself. Even now that she has gained the knowledge and sense of efficacy necessary to act, periods of enforced inactivity can result in intense depression. One example of this is when, due to a combination of bail conditions and a car accident, she found herself literally immobilised in a bedsit during the Chernobyl accident and the bombing of Libya. She *hated being physically strapped down in a way that I couldn't move*

---

[16] Helen Haste, "Everybody's Scared - But Life Goes On: Coping, Defense and Action in the Face of Nuclear Threat", *Journal of Adolescence* 12 (1989), p. 24.

around, was infuriated, and found it *incredibly frightening seeing it all on television, [. . .] not being able to do anything, and worried sick about. [. . .] the women at camp, who I knew would be doing things.* The depressions arise particularly in those periods when she can **feel** but not **act**.

In fact, Anna describes herself as *hyperactive* and as *totally depressed, downhearted, and useless if I'm not doing something positive.* Since her first political action as a teenager (setting up the organisation for children in care), *the periods where I didn't do anything [were] only because I didn't know how.* And it is pertinent that her most frightening and recurrent dream is an image of entrapment and stagnation after the bomb has gone off:

> *[There was] a white horse and it was in a park, and I think the park was in Huddersfield, and there was these railings around this park, and it was raining and really misty, and this horse came charging through this park, and somehow, I knew in this dream, that the bomb had gone off, and it was, like, all kind of stagnant, and this white horse running, and it had fallen into this, like quagmire, and not being able to get out, and it was struggling to get out, and that was the most frightening one I've ever had.*

There is not the space to explore the role of childhood trauma in the other activists' lives in such detail. However, it is worth briefly noting some parallels in Rosa's story. She also, at an early age, confronted a frightening, even terrifying situation outside her control. She "lost" her parents in one sense - through alcoholism - and had to play adult to both them and a younger sibling. She coped

and survived. This survival was not accomplished through repressing this experience. The pain of it was still evident when she told her story to me, prefacing it with the remark that it was *a sad one* and describing the misery of being *no longer valued*. However, there were helping witnesses, in the form of an elder married sister and the catechist. And, like Anna, this capacity for "coping" and "survival" was increasingly turned outwards to embrace others. Rosa "converted" her parents, taught herself to read and write in a foreign language, became a catechist, a woman preacher, a community worker, and latterly, founder and vice-president of a national movement. It was a gradual, step-by-step process, marked by setbacks, and by periods of terrifying violence, and of stagnation, loss and devaluation. Overall, however, she gained an increasing sense of, firstly, personal and, then, political efficacy and control, and a growing belief in her ability to change and renew both her own life and the lives of others.

In Rosa's case, one senses a resonance between the loss of parents and the later death of the catechist. Both these experiences sensitised her to the pain and suffering of the widows that she determined to help. She is not a widow or orphan, nor does she wish to become one in the same way that she identified with, and wanted to become like, the catechist. However, she had had orphan- and widow-like experiences, which increased her ability to know and feel how the orphans and widows were feeling. Her empathy is clearly evident, empathy that perhaps developed as a seven-

year-old who had judge the moods and needs of parents who were mainly inebriated, and as "parent" herself to a younger sibling.

> *So the women, then, when I went to their cantons, they started talking to me about their situation, how they live, their great sacrifices. At the time, well, it just really pained me - sometimes I'd cry when I heard about the widows' situation. As well as the orphans: when they saw me - and since their mothers would say to them, "She's the one who always talks to us on the radio" - the children would come right up to me, and they'd start to tell me "We're orphans . . ." Some had just lost their father, and some their mother and father: complete orphans. So, that's how it happened - how I was pained: what could I do for the people?*

Interestingly, Rosa is as perceptive as Miller in identifying the brutalising effects of trauma. She explained why she does not want revenge against the soldiers who have harmed them: *They're also our people from the same pueblos. Instead of helping people they're just killing their own people, but it's not because they want to do it: they're just like us, but they've been treated like animals, we haven't been treated like people - so all they've got is a great anger."*

And, as with Anna, empathy has its costs: when I met her in 1990 she was resting because of exhaustion. She herself saw her symptoms - her stomach and headaches, her *days when my body shakes, when I can't stand up and my skin is burning* - as *attacks of nerves. . . . I can't find a way out, I can't find peace.* She explains that *it isn't easy to listen to*

the life story of an indigenous person, all that's happened to them, all the people who were raped. I feel that it's damaged me . . . but I've never said it would be better to stop doing the work.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that activism in part depends on an individual's sense of political efficacy,[17] and on the saliency of an issue. Anna's and Rosa's experiences suggest that political efficacy emerges from personal efficacy, which can develop as a person learns to cope and overcome the traumatic experiences of childhood. It is an interactive process, in which the more one acts, the greater one's sense of efficay and the more potential there is for further action on a wider stage. Both Anna and Rosa appear to go through the cycles of confrontation, re-ordering and renewal outlined by Lifton. And both are assisted by the helping witnesses that Miller identifies as essential in making this a creative, rather than destructive, process. Action arises not simply from the saliency of the issue, but from a sense of personal connection with it that can be mediated by the saliency of one's own hurts and a capacity for empathy.

Most significantly, these cases show that activism, far from being a deviant state in which the individual tries to "relieve his own [unconcious] disorders by irrelevant

---

[17] Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Psychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987), pp. 207-217.

palliatives"[18], is a healthy state which draws on the conscious awareness of childhood traumas. This awarenesss increases sensitivity to, and empathy with, the pains of a wider community and, when accompanied by feelings of efficacy and the resources necessary for action - including psychic and physical health - results in active commitment. The capacities for empathy and personal efficacy that both Anna and Rosa have developed, as survivors of their own individual hurts, have enabled them to confront the more massive and terrifying problems that threaten us all. Both have gained an awareness that enables them creatively to imagine and imaginatively to create the future.

---

[18] Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*, p. 194.

CHAPTER 9

"IF NOT THIS WAY, HOW?": PRACTISING NON-VIOLENCE

In Chapter 5 I introduced the concept of the politics of connection. That is, a politics that puts a primary emphasis on relationships: both within the movement - between participants - and with the movement's opponents and the "object of action". Relationship is expressed in both concrete and symbolic forms, and the transformation of relationships constitutes part of the group's goals. I explained that the emphasis on sustaining relationships meant that non-violence had to be the chosen method of action, because other forms of action would be destructive. The choice of non-violence is both a collective and an individual decision. The literature in Chapter 3, Part 2 suggested that there is a relationship between an individual's chosen method of action, moral orientation and sense of self, in particular that a care-focussed, and extensive or connected self was more likely to be associated with the choice of non-violence. Thus it seems likely that those engaged in the politics of connection will fit this description.

My data, in fact, suggests that the choice of non-violence is not as simple as this. The apparent homogeneity that exists when one examines action at the level of the group masks the varied basis of the choice at the individual level. In this chapter I shall attempt to show three things: firstly, that, for my respondents, the relationship

between the choice of a non-violent method, moral orientation, and sense of self is a more subtle and complex one than described above. Culture, gender, personal temperament, and personal and public events all interact to determine the method chosen. In particular the influence of culture appears to be more significant than gender, although gender contributes to the way culture is conceptualised. Secondly, the choice is not fixed. The relationship between the collective and the individual is interactive. The actual process of engagement in non-violent action can affect the individual's thinking about non-violence and appears to create a greater awareness of the importance of connection. Thirdly, I am interested in the degree to which a particular moral perspective may be related to particular patterns of thinking about the limits of non-violence.

I shall demonstrate these points by looking in detail at some of the individual biographies. But I should stress at the outset that, while it is possible to group some of the narratives together in order to identify particular patterns of thinking, I am not attempting to make any generalisations on the basis of this tiny sample. My interest is in drawing out the complexity of the processes, and the way they develop, in order to show their significance for my respondents. These individual narratives do, however, provide a challenge to simple generalisations about why individuals choose non-violence, and demonstrate the fluidity and limits of that choice.

For both Piotr and Margaret the choice of non-violence arises out of Christian religious conviction and both stress the centrality of love in their morality. Yet this apparent similarity, when explored in depth, masks quite different interpretations of the Christian message and quite distinct value orientations.

Margaret is a Quaker by upbringing and personal choice. The values which she feels are central to her life are summed up for her in what she describes as the Christian concept of love: *honesty, truthfulness, integrity, compassion, love (including for oneself).* She perceives the common thread in all her actions as trying to prevent *harm to persons primarily but also [to the] environment.* "Harm" is anything that *damages them either spiritually, or mentally, or physically.* But non-violence is not *just about not harming people, not physically hurting them. It's much more about working in a totally different way, of using persuasion, of using encouragement.*

Margaret's choice of non-violence is related to the way she perceives the truth:

> *I see the truth (and I think this comes from Voltaire) as round, and, by definition, you can't see all of it, but you can recognize that it's like a ball and that therefore there are parts that you don't see. One person will see one side of a problem, and another person will see another side of the problem. The truth is that both problems exist, but, although, you can recognize the other person's, forever seeing everybody's point of view is not actually particularly helpful. [. . .] You are placed in a particular relationship to the truth that is, that you can see your particular part of it, and your part in the play is to say what you see.*

Margaret is saying that she has a responsibility to present the truth as she sees it while recognising that others may have a different perception. Non-violence is the only strategy that allows for action and listening simultaneously.

Thus, for Margaret, non-violent action is an expression of a care-focussed morality. It is the only method that allows her to act without causing harm; to both present her own views and listen reponsively to another's, while requiring an empathic connection with them: *because otherwise how else will you know what's going to harm them, unless you put yourself in their shoes?*

Piotr, in contrast, chooses non-violence as an expression of a justice-focussed morality. For Piotr a moral person is someone who lives according to his principles: *To say that this is right and that is wrong and then do something else means that I am immoral.* These principles are drawn from the Ten Commandments, which Piotr perceives as an expression of natural law; and from Jesus' injunction that we should love one another as ourselves. Piotr sees this as the central commandment, from which all else follows, including the ideal of non-violence.

> *Being a Christian to me, the main and the basic commandment is the commandment of love . . . to love everybody, and the other, like, ten commandments including not to kill, are more technical, but I think that it is impossible to find such a situation in which it could be possible to kill anybody and in the same time love him.*

What is clear from all my interviews with Piotr is that, while he has very close and loving relationships with his own family, and is clearly kind and courteous to his patients and friends, feelings of connection and empathy in general do not come easily to him. He describes himself as *a moral man. I mean, ethics is very important to me* and duty as *the motor of my activity.* He also describes himself as failing to live up to his ideals: *not empathic enough,* in some ways *intolerant* and judgemental; sometimes *violent, hot-tempered, impetuous, vehement, and stubborn.* He defines love as a *principle* rather than as *one of the emotions.* Thus, perhaps not surprisingly, *I try not to act by feeling, I try to control my feelings by intellect.*

It is his commitment to the abstract principles of love and non-violence which provide constructs that allow him to act against the grain of his personality. The way in which action is motivated by abstract reasoning, rather than compassionate identification, is made clear from the following excerpt. I asked Piotr if there was a common thread to his actions. He responded that the thread was *the feeling of duty,* that his task each day was to judge what would be the right action in his current situation

> P: *The demand, to do something today might may be completely different than from yesterday. Because the situation in which I am now is completely different. Today somebody has fallen into a river and I have to save him. And yesterday there was an old woman wanting to cross the street, and then I should help her.*
> L: *But I can see a common theme immediately between those two things: [both] are to do with helping another person.*

> P: *I would rather say that in those things the common thing was not that I should help another person - perhaps in these examples, yes - but that in both these situations I have to think about what I should do because of my morality.*

Piotr is making clear that it is not response to need that motivates him, but a judgement of what is the right action based on his principles. Responsibility, for Piotr, arises partly from "noblesse oblige": that is - as explained in Chapter 7 - his sense that he is relatively privileged compared to others and that privilege entails duty. *Perhaps the most important thing is duty, and then when I feel that something is my duty I have to do it. If I don't do it, it is something terrible.* Responsibility also arises from his sense of greater competence than others: *I think that very often I feel that I have to do something because [. . .] I know if I do it it will be well done and if I leave it to the others I can't rely on it.* One of the things that disturbed him about communism was that no one would take responsibility: *If everybody, or all together, are responsible, then nobody is in fact responsible. <u>And I don't like it</u>!* (Piotr's emphasis.)

Piotr has a separate sense of self, and, thus, responsibility arises out of his sense of separateness and difference from others, and out of the importance of personal autonomy rather than of connection to them. One has the responsibility to live up to one's principles and use one's skills to the best of one's ability. He illustrates his perspective graphically by referring to

Jesus' parable about the man who gave each of his servants a sum of money to look after while he was away. The two servants with the largest amounts invested it and gave the master more on his return. The third servant had hidden his small sum away in order to keep it safe. The master, angered, took that small sum and gave it to the others. I have always found this a difficult story, seeming as it does to punish the least privileged and needy. But Piotr was clear about the meaning, namely, that one has a responsibility to make good use of whatever talents one is given, or one will be punished by losing what one has: *you have some role you know. And you have an obligation to do this role [. . .] or vocation . . . you must find it, sometimes it's not so clear. [. . .] I feel that everybody on earth has his own vocation.*

For Margaret, in contrast, in keeping with her care-focussed morality, responsibility means response to need: *I work by response, and I respond to stimulus which, incidentally, is one of the five things that [. . .] defines a living organism. And this continues to reassure me that I am living [. . .].* It means the capacity to act on the issues put in front of her. Thus Greenham Common and the cruise convoys were manifestations of the nuclear threat outside her front door. She also feels a particular responsibility to respond to what is in front of her because of her own background as a German Jew and her awareness of the failure of response at that particular historic period.

> *Part of the community watched while another part of the community was being annihilated. And this is, sort of, part of my background - that part of my family were amongst the ones that stood by and did nothing. And it's very much one of the things, obviously, that encourages me to not shut my eyes: when something happens on my door step, I know I shouldn't.*

This focussed responsiveness is rooted in her religious faith, which itself is an expression of connection: *This is my relationship with God. That which is in front of my nose. [. . .] The next step is generally fairly clear to you, or, if it isn't, then you have to wait until it is.* It also protects her from being overwhelmed by demands.

> *I get my sense of direction from a combination of what my conscience is telling me and the opportunity that is actually in front of me from where I am. There's just too many things, and this is plain common sense.*

And, unlike Piotr, she sees her feelings as increasingly important in helping her judge how to act: *I don't see any need to put anything aside. Why restrict any source [of light]?*

Moreover, Margaret sees this responsiveness as a value in itself, one that is missing from public life, which she perceives as dominated by *warped values,* because it excludes what women have learnt in the home

> *Jesus was trying to actually say something quite similar. OK, he was a man [but] I thought he had a damn good try at identifying that something is missing from society, and he actually said it in so many words, and the words were "I have come not*

to break the law, or overturn the law, but to complete it.

Like Piotr, she illustrates her point further by drawing on the parables, in her case that of the Good Shepherd.

You know it's not the most cost-effective thing, wandering off after one lost sheep, but it's the sort of thing every mum does every day. Another one is the parable of the guys that were sent out to work, and some of them worked for eight hours, and some of them worked for two hours, and some of them only worked for one hour, and they all got paid the same at the end of the day. [. . .] In fact, if you were to substitute roast potatoes or bread for money you'll find that it is what every mother does every day to her family: regardless of what they have earned and deserved during the course of the day, they get their tea put in front of them.

By showing how Christian teaching emphasises the values drawn on by maternal practise - compassion and attention to need, just as much as justice, reciprocity and fairness - Margaret underlines her own care-focussed morality. Not surprisingly, she sees the problem posed by the Heinz dilemma as the druggist *undervaluing need . . . need is an undervalued factor in human relationships* and, although she does not suggest stealing herself, does consider it an option, provided she had the skill: thus, context is also important. She also emphasises the need for personal connection to motivate action.

M: *I wouldn't go robbing a chemist to save the life of someone I didn't know.*

L: *Why not?*
M: *Because I wouldn't be sufficiently involved to take that sort of action. My actions are very strongly based on what's in front of my nose, you know, what is actually placed in the line of my life. And something that is not placed in the line of my life I don't regard as my personal business in the same way as something that is.*

Stealing is wrong because it is uncaring:

We can't live in a world where people freely steal from each other, this is not integrity, and it is not caring and kind to steal from other people. So, basically, it's something you don't do unless you really, really have to.

Thus Heinz cannot be aquitted, but it was *a reasonable theft,* so he should not be punished. Piotr, in contrast, draws attention to rights and obligations. While bothered by the druggist's *profiteering,* he feels stealing is absolutely wrong because ownership is a natural right. Ownership also carries the duty to share with those who do not own. Thus Heinz should be found guilty, although not punished.

What Piotr and Margaret do have in common is that it was engagement in non-violent collective action that turned a rather passive belief in non-violence that had not been thought out into a more active and articulated understanding of the issues involved. Engagement also had a transformative effect on themselves.

Piotr felt his perspective was broadened, he became more tolerant and found he could relate to people better. For Margaret, taking action moved her from the private sphere of home to the public one of the street (literally),

and the effect was more dramatic. She states: *I took Quakers for granted, did not think about violence and non-violence until Greenham.* Greenham, particularly Cruisewatch, gave her the opportunity to put her ideas into practice. It gave her courage, allowed her to rediscover her intelligence and ability to *think for myself, . . . [and to] act quickly and decisively when I needed to, and organise.*

Through contact with the women at the camp she came to redefine concepts like altruism:

> *There's the self-centered and there's the other-centered,and I've learnt from Greenham to be both. But before that, when I was working on Quaker Christianity, you are taught to believe that the right thing is to be altruistic and to put yourself very much second. I now figure it is OK to behave selfishly, and that it is part of altruism, the two things go together, and you can't have genuine altruism without some sort of gratification in it for yourself.*

She also came to reconsider what constitutes violence:

> *I do feel uncomfortable at any aggression at all. It has a lot to do with my upbringing and what have you, I dare say, but it does make me feel uncomfortable, and I do have to make an effort to say to myself, "this is reasonable aggression; this is reasonable anger; there is cause here." And also, I have learnt from Greenham that to do this appeasing thing, mediating thing, can actually be siding with the [aggressor.]*

All of this was bound up with her

> *growing sense of identity as woman, meaning having something to offer. Before, the woman was the wife and the mother. [. . .] It's sort of blown me apart in some ways, like I've had to start*

> *questioning my religion and Christianity and all my . . . the ways I've run my life and the way I've thought of myself, and all the rest of it. Yet, at the same time, it's brought a lot of things together as well. Things have started making sense to me that didn't before. Anything that increases your perception of truth, or ability to be honest, affects your integrity, affects your wholeness.*

Margaret has not lost her sense of the importance of care, or her definition of herself as connected. Defining herself in terms of relationships is still a primary part of her sense of self, but she has learned to value and take care of herself, to value her autonomy and have the confidence to explore and extend her own unique ways of thinking. She no longer perceives herself as a *doormat*, but exemplifies the mature moral judgement which Gilligan identifies as "the emergence of an increasingly complex understanding of the relationship between self and other" and "a reflective understanding of care as the most adequate guide to the resolution of conflicts in human relationships."[1]

The contrasting cases of Diana and Darek also show that the choice of non-violence can be an expression of both a justice-focussed morality and a care-focussed one. They also show the interactive nature of the choice, and the way that actual practice affects thinking. For both respondents, in spite of different perspectives, engagement leads to increasing emphasis on connection and relationship.

---

[1] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.105.

I described Diana as having a mixed moral perspective in childhood, and for her, like Bardige's face value thinkers, non-violence was initially a *gut reaction.* It was her engagement with Greenham that helped her to articulate and develop non-violence as a personal and political philosophy of care and connection. Her *whole concept of morality . . . developed and changed* through engagement with Greenham:

> *I think part of my activism was intolerance. . . . I mean part of my motivation was that I couldn't stand other people doing these things and I had to stop them, and I think intolerance comes into that a lot, and now it's much more I think that people have the capacity to change and have the capacity to be better people.*

She now perceives non-violence itself, along with feminism, as the central values around which she defines herself and organises her life. In fact *my feminism encompasses my non-violence,* non-violence being a method of action that entails *caring and compassion,* and feminism meaning a connected sense of self: *being a woman who recognises the values of other women [. . .] a celebration of women's reality.*

Underlying these beliefs is a morality that entails, primarily, awareness and responsiveness to others. For Diana, a moral person is *a person who is . . . aware that there are questions, that we . . . are . . . about the way that we live our lives.* Morality is

> *about recognising what's going on around you and reacting accordingly [. . .] having to be very true to your own beliefs, whatever they may be, but with half an ear open or an ear open to what others around are feeling and thinking, and being able to, sort of, go forward with them too but not getting too stuck in it, but not getting swept along by the tide.*

What Diana appears to be articulating here is the need to find a way to be true to oneself while respecting others' truths. This is not moral relativism. (She feels, for example, that *it's absolutely wrong to kill*, but acknowledges her own inconsistencies in wearing leather and the possibility that is necessary to kill animals, for survival, in certain cultures.) She takes a position similar to Margaret's, stating that

> *my non-violence stems from a sense that people have a right to be listened to, as well as being made to listen to me [. . .] and that, to ever change anything, you can't just look at it from one side. You've actually got to have a sense of other peoples' realities.*

Non-violence is the only method that allows this. This is why Gandhi defines non-violent struggle as *satyagraha*, literally, truth struggle. His position is that no one has the monopoly on truth, thus ones' own must be tested out through a method of struggle that allows the other to present their truths as well.[2]

Diana's responsive, care-focussed morality is best exemplified by the way she defines the problem with nuclear

---

[2] Ronald Duncan, *The Writings of Gandhi* (London: Faber, 1951; Fontana 1971), pp. 65--99.

weapons, and the way she puts her non-violence into practice. The horror of nuclear weapons is not simply the deaths they have caused and will cause, but our brutalisation and failure of awareness:

> *The fact that we can do this [. . .] it's become so normal and so unshocking [. . .] we've actually come to this stage of being so brutalised that we have lost any concept of . . . I think that's the awfulness of it really. [. . .] Death is a huge part of it. But it's how we live our lives which is even, perhaps, a larger part of it [. . .] it can be anything, from driving too fast and so not caring about people on the roads, or stealing from a radical bookshop that's got no money, or just in everyday relationships and friendships.*

The practise of non-violence, in contrast, has to be imbedded in the maintenance of those everyday relationships if it is to have meaning. For example,

> *there's been times when women have desperately needed looking after and I wanted to do something in the base, or there's been some action on the convoy or something . . . but when it comes to it they've got to take priority. Because we're a community that relies on women . . . treating women in a . . . respecting life really, . . . that would have been incredibly bad to say "I don't care about you, I reckon the base is more important", really, that's a mistake. That may be frustrating sometimes. I think that's another . . . that's what I also call womens' ways of working, counting the cost, if you like, of our actions.*

Diana clearly has a care-focussed morality. Her narrative makes clear that it was the process of engagement, through living with women of all ages and from a wide variety of backgrounds, and dealing with the base personnel, that particularly fostered openness and tolerance.

Greenham encouraged critical faculties [. . .] but in a very creative way, I think. When I got to about fifteen it was getting a bit too much, like I was having to make a stand against people, and having to hold my corner: now I think I'm much more . . . relaxed. I'm not frightened of saying "I don't know" any more, either. [. . .] I was stuck in a bit of that traditional politics of, we've got our way and we're going to stick to it because this is the way to do it. I think I have realised that the world is not as easy as that, and that I don't know everything, and I'm going to make mistakes, and that is how it's going to be, because it's a very constant process. [. . .] Winning is not so important to me anymore, really.

L: *What became important then?*

D: *To actually have the debate. Winning is important, but I think if you have a debate, and your only aim is to win that debate at the time, then if you're very blind to what the other person is saying to you you will then make them very blind to what you're saying to them. It's a short-term solution that offers no long term hope.*

One can detect some parallels here with the transition from "face value thinking" to "multiple lens thinking" that Bardige observed in adolescent girls' responses to the holocaust. The difference is that, while Diana's outrage at and intolerance of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons pushed her into non-violent direct action at fifteen, development of an awareness of complexity, and compassion for her opponents, has arisen through the actual practice and development of that action in a collective context over three years. Greenham fostered Diana's capacity to act in a way that fostered relationships. Multiple lens thinking developed in this way cannot be used to rationalise inaction.

Interviewing Diana over the two-year period after she left the camp, it was possible to see her adapting to the changing political context, and struggling to find the most appropriate way to act and remain true to her self. In 1990, interviewed while spending time on Salisbury Plain alone following the convoy, she stressed the way this form of responsive action allowed her to stay in touch with reality and be true to herself: hence, she felt ambivalent about going to college.

> D: [. . .] *I actually think that I'm locked into this really and I'd be fed up and miserable without it.*
> L: *Without confrontation or . . . ?*
> D: *No without that contact, I prefer to use the word "contact" rather than "confrontation".*
> L: *With what?*
> D *With . . . with . . . with all these things that I'm opposed to, really.*
> L: *And you can't see them ever being got rid of?*
> D: *No, not in my lifetime, certainly not. And also, I think that it's not just about looking at those things out there that we've achieved, and changed things or not changed things, and failed and succeeded or . . . it's also about myself. . . it's almost like I need them as much as . . . to find . . . to be able to . . . find myself, not find myself, I hate that phrase,but <u>to know my own mind and to be true to myself, I have to keep them in my mind's eye</u>.*(Diana's underlining, 1991)
> L: *How does that help you?*
> D: *I think it's . . . it sort of helps with the sense of purpose and the sense of knowing what it is you're talking about.*
> L: *So what do you find that you know about yourself by being in contact with this? I mean, it's like you're almost saying, "I can only define myself by these sort of negative things".*
> D: *Well no, it's not a question of only defining myself, but I feel that I'm on a sounder basis for defining myself by the fact that I am in contact with these things. That if I shut myself away with loads of books and read the life works of great writers and things, that I wouldn't have that sense of reality that I have from this involvement and this contact.*

Diana appears to be saying that she needs a tangible physical relationship with the issues that bother her in order to be truly herself: she creates this sense of self by activism. Eighteen months later the convoys had been discontinued and most of the warheads removed. When I interviewed her she was living in a flat in North London, taking A-levels for university entrance, and was not particularly politically engaged: she had difficulty in defining herself clearly:

> L: *How do you, how do you describe yourself to yourself?*
> D: *Dissatisfied. . . . I think I am a person on a journey but I am not sure where I am going. . . . I don't know how much time I allow myself to get to know myself . . . really. . . .*

She had, the previous year at college, become increasingly aware of the conflict created by her need to respond directly to a problem - in that case the Gulf War - and her desire to study and increase her understanding of those problems in order to respond more effectively in the long term. Not actively responding could be *very damaging. Because I feel that I'm not really being true to myself, not actually living my life in the way that I would feel happy with. . . I think that's why I was ill the first term, partly.* She would find herself asking:

Why am I going to do this course when there's so much to be done? Why am I paying attention to myself when the world needs the attention?

L: *And what was the answer to the question?*

D: *I can only do what I'm capable of doing. And if actually the attention to myself enables me to do more about the world in which I live, then actually . . . that's perfectly valid.*

Moreover, she found that the relationships she had with other women at the college, some with different perspectives on the Gulf War, both grounded her and provided support. Like Margaret, she has come to see that care of others requires care of the self. Moreover, her beliefs and non-violence are still central to her self-concept. *I'm not sure what would be left if you took them away.*

Darek, in contrast to Diana, has never considered himself a pacifist and was, as a teenager, drawn to the romantic ideal of insurrection: *the tradition, the history, those red-white emblems, symbols and so on, it was my world. . . . It was that automatically, that when Poland is independent, this society and me personally, we will be happy.* After the failure of Solidarity in 1981 and his own imprisonment and internment, his anger and hatred of communism was so great that he seriously considered engagement in some form of insurrectionist movement. *Because of this big hate I thought that only the fighting for independence, but without such non-violence programmes like the programme of Solidarity, could be successful. I wanted very much to be successful.* He then decided this was not the way, *not for moral reasons*, but quite simply because

Poland lacked the means for a successful insurrection. He was still quite clear that demonstrators should respond to police violence by fighting back, for example, and increasingly concerned by the growing apathy of Polish society.

Thus Darek's decision to help initiate a non-violent anti-militarist campaign was pragmatic and tactical. He remembers asking himself why he was in WiP *if I have the big commitment with the tradition of Polish insurrection.* And if he believed that the modern state needed military force, *why do I make an activity against military force?* The answer was threefold. Firstly, he was aware that the government was using the peace issue itself. Slogans in public places, for example, had shifted from exhortations to uphold socialism, painted in red, to ones to work for peace, painted in blue. Western peace initiatives were heavily covered in the media. Darek felt that the West misunderstood the role of peace in international relations, *promoting peace as the only value, at any cost. Because it is not a peace, it is a silence, yes? There is a difference between silence and peace.* However, an anti-militarist movement offered the opportunity to protest against *militarism in the service of the communist power* and to offer a *contradiction for the [government's] peace propaganda,* that is, to call the government's bluff.

Secondly, it allowed for the creation of an *organisation which would be more active,* and could counteract Solidarity's passivity. Thirdly, he knew that it

was an issue that was likely to draw attention and interest from the West.

What is interesting is that the period of engagement in WiP from 1985 to 1989 does appear to have altered Darek's perception of the peace issue and shifted the way he defined his core values. He explains, for example, how initially he found the idea of personal peace treaties between activists in different countries *stupid, not important politically. But when . . . I started thinking about this it started to be also for me the basement from which we should start.* I was interviewing him in autumn 1989, at the time of attacks on Polish people in East Germany, and he continued:

> *I have felt that it is the effect of many years of having done nothing on this personal basis. It was one of the moments which forced me to feel that individual contacts are the best solution for making a friendship between nations. And whereas I would say before that nation is something very important and good, now I don't want to say that it is something bad, but it can be very bad, yes, thinking in the categories of nation, but I'm sure that, generally . . . thinking in the categories of individual contacts, individual friendship cannot be bad.*

Participation in a workshop on demilitarisation at the international seminar in 1987[3] allowed an *opening of my heart and my mind on other problems, in other countries,* and he found himself arguing with fellow Poles that Polish

> *problems are fundamental but we shouldn't forget about other nations and other problems in the*

---

[3] See pp. 230--231.

> *other parts of the world, even from tactical reason that when we are provincial and when we think only about Polish problems we can be alone.*

Thus, while in 1983 Darek saw independence and freedom as the core values around which he organised his life, by 1989 he felt that it was necessary to *connect freedom and responsibility*, and that *the main value is a person now, individual life, [. . .] human dignity and listening to people, because it is connected with the listening to people*. His main interest in the new post-communist Poland of 1989 was in editing a political and cultural weekly that encouraged dialogue. *I would like to have a responsible reader who has his own ideas but to be honest to him, to show him other ideas that he can choose*. Unlike many of his friends he had decided to stay out of *the political game*. He wished

> *to speak in my own voice [. . .] political work means to choose between friends and enemies. I don't want to be political in this sense. I would like to, to make the analysis, for instance, of events, of statements, on political gestures and so on, without dividing this world into friends and enemies.*

It is possible to see a convergence in the experiences of Diana and Darek in that their participation in collective non-violent action has increased their sense of the importance of dialogue and relationship as a means of political transformation. Both also show a protean flexibility in their ability to alter their careers in response to the changing political realities. But this

convergence should not mask basic differences in moral focus.

Darek's primary concern is still with the autonomy and dignity of the individual. He sees his values as arising out of his Christian upbringing and as expressed in the Ten Commandments. But the Ten Commandments are now more significant as a sound expression of natural law rather than theological teaching. His decision to stay out of politics in 1989 in order to analyse what was happening and *retain clarity,* and his decision to stand for parliament in the 1991 elections, because of his feeling that many politicians were more concerned with *the fight for power* than in acting responsibly to develop the state as a democratic society, reflect his concern with the abstract principles of justice rather than a direct response to need: as did his earlier decision to give up being *a doctor for the individual* in order to be a *doctor for society.* One of the principle reasons for standing as a Democratic Union candidate in 1991 was that party's emphasis on the rule of law, and its concern to somehow achieve a just and equitable transition to the free market. Asked by retired people what he would do for them if elected he replied

> *I know what I cannot offer. I cannot offer, for example, the organisation of people's lives, (because President Walesa was saying I will help you and people were thinking that he will solve all their problems.) No, I will not do it, I will not do it. I can help them in making a good law, this means a law that I feel is good; and that I will be in contact with them to understand what they feel about it and we will have a dialogue.*

He perceives responsibility not in terms of responsiveness to others but as *being consequent in what you say what you do.* It entails respect for one's own work and behaviour, thus acting to the best of one's ability and showing similar respect for the work of others.

However, he is adamant that *I don't feel responsible for the society,* and that his activism did not arise out of concern for others needs, but out of an awareness of his own oppression and lack of freedom. It is reciprocity, the realisation that his own needs are best met by aiming to achieve them for all, that motivates him:

> *I would like to live in a normal society or healthy society, and only because of that I am interested in this public work. But in the same moment I look at my needs and I feel that my needs are similar to other peoples'. [. . .] I do it because, because of my heart, my heart . . . dictates me to do it [. . .] it goes directly from my need to be more free. From my need . . .to be more independent. From my need to read better literature, to speak with free persons, and so on [. . .] and the good situation is when my needs are similar to the needs of other persons. It is a kind of a hedonism for me.*

Interestingly, the birth of his son, and the necessity of looking after him as a single father, introduced Darek for the first time to the concept of responsibility as a direct response to another's quite different needs. It was the *first time that I understood that there is something like a duty which is not directly connected, directly connected with my own needs,* and that it could be a pleasure. In Darek's case it appears that taking on maternal activites does affect his moral focus, but his

decision in 1990 to go into television journalism and then into mainstream politics meant handing a large part of that responsibility to his parents, and left his fundamental outlook unchanged.

Diana's and Darek's quite different moral perspectives are underlined by their responses to the Heinz dilemma. For Darek, the dilemma arises from the conflict between the right of the pharmacist to sell the product of his work at the price he thinks appropriate, and the right of Heinz to help his wife. The solution is for Heinz to *find people like me who will help him.* Stealing is absolutely wrong *because it is the moral law.* Thus if he does steal he should be found guilty and sentenced: *perhaps he should not be punished but he should understand that he is guilty.*

In contrast, Diana is quite clear that *the druggist has got his priorities wrong,* and asks, *can Heinz break in and steal it?* The duty for changing the situation lies with the pharmacist *because he's in a position of power,* and if Heinz does steal *the judge should haul up the bloody . . . chemist He should let him go free.*

While Darek is concerned with abstract principles of right and wrong, Diana sets the situation firmly in context. Thus, asked if Heinz should steal for a stranger she points out that

> *would and should are two different things. There are probably thousands of strangers out there who would benefit from me stealing something for them. I mean, I walk past people on the Tube on Waterloo Bridge . . . and sometimes I empty my purse, and sometimes I say sorry.*

Stealing is a problem because of its affects on the individual. *Often people who don't have steal from other people who don't have.* And she herself knows how painful and distressing it can be to be the victim of theft. *But at the same time I think that often we misidentify the wrong, people identify burglary or joyriding or whatever as moral wrongs . . . but neglect to look at the society that leaves such a percentage of the population on the poverty line.*

I have discussed Darek and Diana in detail to show how non-violence can be the result of both tactical and a philosophical choices that reflect quite distinct moral perspectives. And, while the use of this method increases the importance of connection and relationship to others, for both of them, understanding these different perspectives helps to explain the contrasting ways in which commitment develops in the long run. Darek's sense of responsibility results in engagement in mainstream politics. Diana's continuing commitment to principled non-violence and her responsiveness to the violence around her pose a constant dilemma in terms of career choice.

The other two respondents from Greenham, Mary and Anna, also have care-focussed and connected selves, which, like Diana's, appear to have developed out of the more mixed perspectives of earlier years. During the course of her engagement, Mary shifts her energy from the damage done by nuclear weapons to what she sees as the underlying issue of male violence to women, as expressed in the issues of rape, pornography and abortion, but her main concern is still

protection from harm. Anna's narrative was explored in Chapter 8, but it is worth examining further here as it is a good example of the way the concept of "oneself" as a non-violent person with non-violent values develops interactively through engagement.

Although, as a child, Anna's main concerns were - understandably - surviving and escaping her oppressive environment, when I interviewed her in 1990 at Greenham she emphasised connection, and her moral orientation could be described as care focussed. For example, she evaluated the major split that occurred at Greenham in 1987 not in terms of who was right or wrong, but in terms of the damage it did to relationships and the pain caused. In her view the main problem was *that women I felt incredibly close to, although I might not agree with them all the time, [. . .] we'd been torn apart.* Her ideal world was one *where everybody cares about everybody and wouldn't do things that would hurt other people [. . .] where if someone does something that's hurtful or damaging to someone else, then everybody sits down <u>with</u> them, and, like, takes them through it, rather than punishes.* Although not at all religious, she was attracted by James Lovelock's *Gaia* hypothesis of the Earth as an organism in which everything is interconnected.[4] Thus, all aspects of life required care to maintain the whole. And Anna's capacity for empathy has clearly created a "connected self" which underlies her strong feelings of

---

[4] J. E. Lovelock, *The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine* (London: Gaia Books, 1991).

personal responsibility. Anna explains that she *would feel that I'd be condoning it if I didn't act. I don't feel like I can remain silent on anything that I feel strongly about because I feel like I'm part of the problem if, if I don't do something to change it.*

Yet there was little non-violent about her environment or her behaviour as a small child, and a large body of literature argues that this is enough to predict the development of an equally violent adult self. But this was not the case. She found a way to escape that environment and although, during her initial period in care, her anger was expressed self-punitively in acts of violence, she was also able to establish and maintain warm relationships with people able to recognise her needs and talents. This gave her the basis to begin to act constructively and non-violently to increase her own and other's autonomy. Far from brutalising her, her childhood experiences gave her a sensitivity to the pain of others that made her *feel bad* if she hurt them. She intuitively rejected the military and, without being able to explain why, found herself moved and attracted by the first non-violent demonstration she attended. She knew that she was emotionally opposed to and terrified by the thought of nuclear weapons, and her growing self-confidence as president of a student union allowed her to move to Greenham before she had any articulate theoretical position on the value of non-violence. She did not go to Greenham because she was a non-violent peace activist, but because she thought that she would like to

become one. I believe there is an important theoretical distinction to be made between acting on established values and acting in order to develop them. Once at Greenham, Anna did not simply adopt the behaviour and values of other women, but developed and adapted them, thus, as in the past, creating an environment in which she could function.

From the beginning of Anna's time at the camp she was committed to non-violence, both as a tactic and as philosophy, *because a violent response was just absolutely fruitless, and not only that . . . the thing that you were fighting against . . . it's a total contradiction if you're going to use violence to stop violence.* This approach is in marked contrast to Anna's way of coping with conflict as a child, and she states that she *didn't find non-violence easy.* However, she does not regard her current views as a great change in attitude, in that instinctively she had always been against violence. It was, rather, that living at the camp provided the opportunity, through endless discussion and the models provided by other women, to think through the implications of non-violence for herself in terms of personal action. Frequently arrested and imprisoned, she became skilled at defending herself in court, and succeeded in making positive relationships with individual magistrates and police. The dialogue was an important aspect of non-violent behaviour for her: *The more we talked about the issues with them, the more dialogue, the more their consciousness was raised. [. . .] I felt if we were gonna change anything we had to change the people.*

Her ability to change people was demonstrated to her quite dramatically on one occasion in court, when a police officer supported her account of another officer's harrassment and intimidation in the face of that officer insisting it had not occurred. She was so moved by the first officer's decision to "break ranks" and tell the truth that she burst into tears. *I felt like I'd achieved something, that I'd actually touched this MOD [Ministry of Defence] person enough that he actually had to make a decision and had go against the grain almost, and stand up and tell the truth.* At a later date, at some cost to his standing with his colleagues, the same officer acted as a character witness for her. It was at this time that she began to have difficulties with the style of action of some of the women at the camp:

> *I couldn't cope with some women's absolute anger at the MOD. I mean, I felt it myself and totally understood it [. . .] but [. . .] I couldn't work like that. [. . .] Being totally antagonistic towards them, and screaming at them, wasn't going to change a thing.*

These were in fact the same loud and firm women that she had found admirable on first coming to the camp. She still felt emotionally close to them, but was also concerned by a growing *elitism* and dominance that did not match the rhetoric of the camp. At the point where she felt she might resolve the issue by living with different women in another area, the split discussed in Chapter 5 occured. Anna found it extremely painful to have women whom she regarded as

family treat her as *an absolute enemy,* and it crystallised her decision to stop living at the camp on a permanent basis. Her sense of her "self" as non-violent was then profoundly challenged by her last prison sentence. Indeed, it challenged her sense of having a coherent self altogether. She resolved the crisis by both re-evaluating and reconnecting with the past, which allowed for a constructive acknowledgement of aspects that had been suppressed in creating the non-violent self at Greenham.

For the Greenham women, non-violent action appears to be an expression of a care-focussed morality and a connected sense of self. For Darek and Piotr, non-violence is the appropriate method by which to struggle for autonomy, dignity and justice. Thus these narratives appear to be in keeping with the thesis that there may be some association between gender and different moral perspectives. However, as I stated above, no general conclusions can be drawn from this sample. What is significant is that these narratives demonstrate that the decision to act non-violently can arise from both a justice and a care perspective. Moreover, the practise of non-violence increased the importance of connection for all six respondents, as demonstrated by their greater emphasis on the importance of relationship, dialogue, empathy and tolerance.

These case studies also raise the question of how far it is possible to separate the influences of gender and culture, given that gender can itself be construed as a

quasi-cultural construct.[5]. The Greenham women express the values created by the particular feminist sub-culture created at Greenham. These were values that were challenged by other women both inside and outside the feminist movement. Non-feminist women, for example, accused Greenham women of failing to care by neglecting their families. Feminists accused Greenham women of overemphasising care and connection and thus reinforcing a dangerous stereotype. In fact, Greenham women constantly undermined both gender stereotypes - that of the uncaring feminist monster and that of the submissive, nurturing, passive, pacifist woman.[6] The values expressed by Darek and Piotr are also those of a particular sub-culture. They are the public values of the male-dominated Polish intelligentsia of the 1980s, drawing

---

[5] Helen Haste and Jane Baddeley, "Moral Theory and Culture: The Case of Gender", in *The Handbook of Moral Development*, ed. W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gewirtz (Erlbaum, 1991).

[6] An action taken on Nagasaki Day (9 August) 1984 demonstrates this. On this occasion the women stripped naked, covered themselves with ashes, and blockaded the main gate to the base. The base personnel were horrified, reluctant to touch or remove the women, and were profoundly disturbed. (They eventually donned protective clothing to do so.) The immediate connection was with the naked, burned survivors of the Nagasaki bomb, and the women wanted to confront the military with that reality. But they were also presenting the men with a challenge to their own stereotypes of naked women: how they should look - beautiful; where they should be - at men's disposal; and how much power they should have - none at all, unless one counts the power of an attractive object. These ugly, terrifying, yet naked and therefore vulnerable, women were stopping the men getting to work, confronting the men with the possible results of their work, and demanding a response. The naked women action could be seen as a demonstration of extreme vulnerability. It was, in fact, a clear statement of women's right to be themselves and an attempt to create awareness and responsiveness in those confronted. The women were in control.

on the romantic tradition of the struggle for independence, the moral teachings of Pope John Paul II emphasising human dignity, and the communitarian values of Solidarity. These values are clearly articulated in the writings of Adam Michnik. He regarded non-violence as the assertion of dignity and autonomy in the face of manifest injustice and oppression, and as the best tactical option for the times. Most significantly, he saw the use of non-violence as a way of asserting moral difference from the oppressors and as a way of avoiding the corruption of "revolutionary violence".[7]

However, Janek's narrative suggests the possibility that issues themselves may "pull" for a particular perspective and overide the influence of both gender and culture. Janek, with his deep concern and love for the environment from an early age, is the most care-focussed of the Poles and appears to have the most connected sense of self.

This is clear from his definition of what is good as *what aims at the heart. Good is what serves all creatures on the earth,* and from his definiton of what makes a person moral as *the ability to bend over another man, the ability to listen to other people.* His suggestion in the Heinz dilemma is that *the druggist should be brought to the dying woman, so maybe he could reconsider his decision and reconsider his greed and the fact that she could die for his greed for $1000.* That is, Janek wishes the pharmacist to be

---

[7] Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and other Essays,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) pp. 87--89.

given the opportunity to respond to need. And his sense of self is defined not simply in terms of connections to other people but the universe:

> *I consider myself as one particle of the universe and that has never changed, I have always felt like that. One particle that considers that what it does has good influence on other particles and the universe itself. But after all it's not sure if it is good or not, and if the whole world will not fall apart.*

Perhaps not surprisingly, the local WiP group that he helped to create put an emphasis on relationship and community. *There were friendships among people who established the movement, it was like a big family,* one in which his own was completely involved. *Because of that closeness, that family atmosphere, WiP organisations in other places appreciated [the group], and those friendships which started then continue and they are very close, although politically now they may be a little divided.* Janek's emphasis on connection is one he carries with him when he decided to be an M.P., a decision arising from his environmental concern: *My attitude was quite pragmatic, the country is dying ecologically.* However, his 1991 electoral pamphlet which called for an *improved quality of life and improved communication between people* was considered *too emotional and too lyrical,* and he is aware of *the risk of losing oneself in "cabinet politics" [. . .] just being involved in the paper bureaucracy and losing the connection with real life.*

In the other five narratives in my study it is not possible to distinguish between a justice and a care perspective. That is to say, all five respondents appear to integrate justice and care concerns in a way similar to that identified by Ward in her study of urban adolescents, (described in Chapter 3). An integrated perspective means that justice and care concerns cannot be separated out without destroying the meaning of the moral judgement.[8] This is not to say that the perspectives are identical to each other. As with the other narratives, they illustrate the overriding importance of culture, particularly in the different meanings and values given to concepts such as justice and equality. And again they demonstrate that the actual practice of non-violence can increase the importance of connection for the individual. These points are best illustrated by looking in greater detail at Magda from Poland and Pedro from Guatemala.

Both are committed to non-violence in principle and both are concerned with issues of justice and care. Magda defines her goal as activating people in order to create *a just society or whatever . . . it's like conscientious objection and human rights and women and ecology is all interconnected, bringing human rights as a rule and creating a society without violence, solving problems in public debate and so on.* Justice entails fair treatment and no

---

[8] Janie V. Ward, "Urban Adolescents' Conceptions of Violence" in *Mapping the Moral Domain,* ed. Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 175--200.

cheating. An action is just if *such rules are established that it avoids hurting as many people as possible.* An action is good *if it's for the justice* and bad if it hurts another person or animal.

Pedro's goal is *social justice, so that the future generations will [. . .] have a little bit better life than what we are living now.* For him a good man is someone who is both *non-violent, understanding, flexible,* and *thinks about equality, democracy.* He is motivated not only by *seeing victims,* but also by injustice.

> *All the aspects really come together to motivate me to work for human rights, because it's not just when someone's killed that's a violation of human rights, but social and economic rights as well. Watching [the abuse of those rights] motivates me.*

However, Pedro, coming from a deprived and marginalised section of his own society, has a different construction of social justice to Magda. He sees it as meaning an bringing an end to terror and repression, and he regards equality as an important component. Magda, brought up under communism, is wary of imposed equality, and, in common with Darek and Piotr, stresses the value of human dignity and individuality, dignity being *the ability to retain oneself, one's [own] values, not to resign or to compromise.* Her most recent project, when I interviewed her in 1991, shortly after she had become president of Polish Amnesty, was a human rights education programme in schools to combat any form of discrimination. Although one might interpret this

as a concern for equality, for Magda it arises from the importance she places on individuality and the strength she gains from her sense of difference: *I have a strong need for individuality, to stress my own difference [. . .] respect for difference is the most important thing*

Pedro also campaigns against discrimination but avoids stressing individual difference.

> *My principles are non-racial, well, let me elaborate that, they're equality. So if I am here in Guatemala, I'm seeing tons of problems around me between men and women, professionals and peasants, ladinos and indigenous people. If I were to say I'm Maya, I'm indigenous, I would feel like I was racist, cutting out other people.*

In this respect I should add, he is different from his three compatriots, who put increasing stress upon their Maya identity.

With the Heinz dilemma, both Magda and Pedro see the pharmacist as abusing his rights. Pedro also feels there is a failure of awareness and response: *the person who makes the drug doesn't understand the suffering of the peasant.* And both regard stealing as wrong, Magda because

> *it is breaking somebody's privacy and it creates the feeling of injustice in this person from whom something is stolen. It is not the rule around which society should be organised: that stealing could be a way of solving problems. There should be rules. Robin Hood is not a solution; it is, rather, a just system that makes stealing unnecessary.*

Magda, however, feels that Heinz has a duty to steal even for a stranger, if that person is dying, although it

would be easier to act in cooperation with a group in which there was a friend of the dying person. For Pedro and for all the Guatemalans, stealing is wrong partly because they cannot imagine it being successful. Pedro also feels that the law requires respect, and his solution is for Heinz to work extremely hard or to borrow money.

In contrast to gender stereotypes, it is Magda who sees herself as somewhat lacking in empathy and inflexible. She finds it hard to forgive members of the old regime for the harm they have done to people, or tolerate them in the new government. Engagement in WiP, however, brought her into contact with Western feminism. She became more aware of what she identified as women's values: greater emotional sensitivity and less competitiveness, and the sexist and discriminatory nature of Polish society: *for me, being a feminist means that those features of women should be treated as seriously as men's characteristic features.* Like the Greenham women she now sees the practice of non-violence, which *in practical terms means more understanding, [and] more democratic decision-making,* as embodying feminist thinking.

While both see action as arising from a synthesis of feeling and intellect, Magda identifies anger and excitement as the primary motivating emotions, while Pedro identifies love. *We're all humans, and humans love life, and, for me, to love is to do the things that are most necessary for the people that are most needy.* Pedro feels that, largely due to the influence of his mother, he has always been

personally inclined to non-violence. But he is clear that it is his engagemement in CERJ that has shown him how to practise non-violence, and that that has created this growth in compassion. *Although I had these principles, I never had ideas before of how I could fight for what I believed in a pacific way.* Later he explained

> P: *I feel much more mature in my work, [. . .] I feel much more humane than I did. A Spanish woman friend of mine said this to me a while ago, and I feel the same, that "the more one suffers, the more humane one becomes, the more aware of humanity".*
> L: *What does it mean to be humane?* [NB, the word "humano" in Spanish means both "human" and "humane". My translator used "human" (above) and "human" (below): as text.]
> P: *The word human is extremely complicated, I mean we're all human beings, but to say I'm more human now is to say that I'm more compassionate, I'm more capable of sharing with the suffering of other people.*
> L: *Is this a change from how you would describe yourself, say ten years ago?*
> P: *I wouldn't have been able to answer in the same manner, but I probably would have explained that they're principles that I've always held, which is non-violent principles.*
> L: *What's changed?*
> P: *I've come to understand the political situation in my country and I've come to understand and learn about the pacific fight.*

This combination of awareness and love also protects him from fear: *the thing I believe is that, knowing exactly what you're doing and why you're doing it: if you have this love, then you lose the fear.* Love, however, is not a substitute for justice. Thus, while Pedro feels that the problem with *the commissioners and the Civil Patrol heads* is that *they don't believe in love*, he also thinks those who

murdered Mrs Mejia (Francisco's mother) should be punished, although he is opposed to the death penalty.

To love is to do the things that are most necessary for the people that are most needy. Thus, love underlies responsiveness. But both Pedro and Magda also see responsibility as arising from relative priviledge: for Pedro, this arises from the competence and knowledge he has gained through educating himself. The knowledge gained from his engagement in CERJ gives him a particular responsibility to act, one he cannot relinquish until he feels confident that there are others who can replace him.

Magda, like Piotr, sees responsibility as arising from the relative priviledge of having a good education and financial support: *I have somehow to pay back this debt [. . .] Everybody has his or her role to fulfil.* Magda also sees responsibility as arising from what she identifies as both a *cosmic* and a *material* connection between her capacity to confront the problems in her own country and the chances of others confronting other problems in their own countries. If someone

> *supports something which is unjust and wrong here and so then she takes responsibility for unjustice in the world. [. . .] I have to somehow help some people or some things to happen, in order to have the feeling that then someone in South Africa also would help. How can I explain? It's like in Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, that at the end he realises that there is this responsibility on all of people in the world, so if there are tribes of Indians - he wouldn't say it in these words - killed somewhere in America, then it also lies on his conscience, the responsibility to do something to prevent it, but he cannot . . . I mean no one can do it straight, you have to do something here.*

Thus *it's connected . . . humankind, I mean, if I were in the United States and protested against nuclear power plants [there], then it's also OK for me because I have this feeling that at that time I would also protest against Zarnowiec* [in Poland].

In exploring my respondents' reasoning behind the choice of non-violence I have shown how that choice can arise from both justice and care perspectives and a perspective that integrates both. In addition the actual practice of non-violence appears to increase the importance of connection and relationship.

What is interesting is that, in spite of this convergence, the different perspectives in my sample do appear to be related to different thinking about the limits of non-violence in a similar manner to Ward's urban adolescents. To recap: Ward found that those with a care perspective saw violence as intrinsically wrong, even if understandable in certain situations. Those with a justice perspective saw violence as justifiable to rectify unfairness; and those with an integrated perspective saw violence as "tolerable and fair" within clearly defined limits established to prevent irreparable harm.

In my study, Diana and Margaret, who have care perspectives, reject violence as fundamentally wrong. Piotr, with a justice perspective, acknowledges contradictory feelings as the following quotation illustrates:

one nature is, let's say Polish nature, very much connected to the Polish tradition of military struggle for independence, and in this nature I can't deny the whole Polish tradition, and all these uprisings, and tradition also of my family, well everybody. And the other nature is, . . . perhaps its something new because the Catholic Church was very much connected to this tradition, in Poland at least, it was supporting this struggle for independence. But I can't think about violence being a Catholic thing. I read something about the just war in Catholic theory and things like that, and I think it is very complicated, because, somehow, in theory perhaps it is possible to believe that a just war is possible. . . . I think I don't have the last answer on it, perhaps sometimes there are some situations when . . . or some bigger values than human life, but it is very difficult for me to find such a situation.

However, his commitment to non-violence does not exclude corporal punishment for his children: *It is very difficult but I think that you can beat a child with love also.* And he can perceive situations where violence might be necessary.

Society should use as little violence as possible. But [. . .] I can't imagine a society with no police, for instance. It's impossible to organise the public life. Even in relations between nations, for instance. There might be a situation like an uprising in [. . .] the Warsaw ghetto. When they were fighting . . . not to defend anything but dignity. I don't know if it was the only solution, but I think it was right.

Darek, likewise, sees violence as a necessity in certain situations when the state has to defend itself.

Pedro and Magda, in keeping with their integrated perspective, are committed to non-violence in principle at a personal and professional level. Both are aware of the

potential for violence in their own work, but reject it. Magda, for example, has studied the

> *biographies of terrorists and it is frightening how similar they are: a background in political science, some kind of activities in non-violent struggle even- and then out of frustration, say, of being on the margin and not accepted and not wanting to be that 60-year-old who is being used instrumentally, they go into terrorism. But I think it is not a good way because they can kill people who are not guilty, and that also endangers their goals because that puts a question mark in the eyes of the society, so their goals can be questioned.*

This is why she feels that *violence as a means of struggle is wrong.* Pedro, similarly, felt that at some point that there

> *was an option to take up arms. I'll give you an example: during La Violencia we were running from the army always, they were following us. And there was a moment when they were really pursuing my parents, and I thought, if I find my parents dead, I might have to take up arms. But now, if you ask me, whatever happens, I will always continue in a pacific route. When CERJ began, which was soon after, my ideas became much more complete and concrete about the possibility of this pacific route. [. . .] When a person acts in the same way that they're enemy is acting, then it always makes the situation worse. It's like saying, if there's a fire, feed it with more wood, then there are always more flames, so the problem doesn't get solved. To make a situation better - you have to if there's trouble - you just leave it for another day and start again. You have to be flexible, it's not to say that one then sits there and just shuts up, it's that both sides have to compromise.*

He is also aware that it is the government that suffers in terms of national and international public opinion *if we can achieve a pacific fight; but if we take up arms, if*

we're fighting for rights below the base of reason, then we become part of that.

But both can envisage certain situations where violence is justified, coming out of their cultural situation. Magda feels that both the Warsaw ghetto uprising and US intervention in the Second World War were right, but the bombing of Dresden was wrong *because it was not just to kill unarmed civilians.*

And Pedro is careful not to condemn the guerillas in his country.

> *It's a very difficult situation. [. . .] Our people have experienced repression, we could say for five hundred years, against the indigenous people, and have always been reclaiming their rights and reclaiming their rights, and the answer from the government has always been a violent one, with arms. And so they answer with arms, some people answer with arms and some people don't. So there are really two forms of fighting.*

This view, that non-violence is a personal choice and that armed struggle cannot be condemned in the Guatemalan situation, is shared by the other Guatemalans.

But again, detailed study of individual narratives confounds any attempt at simple categorisations or generalisation. All the care-focussed activists feel their perspective is limited by experience and that they cannot impose their views on others. For example, Margaret states, *you can't be a pacifist on someone else's behalf.* She also sees that it might have limits.

> *I speak from a fairly comfortable middle class background. I've never been that pushed, you know, that I need to kill people or hurt people to get out of the holes I'm in. So I can only speak from where I am, and respect people who speak or act from totally different positions to mine. [. . .] A situation may arise where it's the lesser evil to harm somebody.*

And Anna, Mary, and Janek, who are all care-focussed, feel that in certain circumstances violence is the only appropriate response:

> *It is difficult to speak about non-violence when concentration camps appear, and when people are shot for smiling or just on suspicion. The only way against such tyrants seems to be violence.* (Janek.)

> *I can't and I will not condemn people who have to take up arms, because when I see what's happening in the world. [. . .] But my confusion is from my own point of view: I also understand the moment you move into an armed conflict you are actually supporting the people you are trying to oppose. And it's a catch-22 position. But I have never had, you know, since I was an infant and since 1945 situation, I have never personally had an armed individual trying to threaten directly the lives of anyone connected personally with me on that one-to-one basis. [. . .] And, therefore, when it comes to people not just building a peace but having to win the peace, I don't know that I have the right to take up some high moral philosophical ground. I don't feel competent to do that.*
> (Mary.)

What my respondents illustrate is the direct influence of personal and historical experiences on thinking about non-violence, especially its use outside the interpersonal sphere. They make direct reference to key historic events within their own cultures, the influence of which can be in contradiction to their moral inclinations - hence the

acknowledgement of internal inconsistencies and feelings of ambivalence. What is clear for all the respondents is that the actual practice of non-violence has extended the sphere of action in which they believe it could be used.

In this chapter I have used my respondents' narratives to explore the thinking behind the choice of non-violence. The fact that the collective acts with the public rhetoric of care and connection may tempt one to assume that those engaged in such groups will themselves come from a care-focussed moral perspective and have a connected sense of self. Some of the literature on moral development, reviewed in Chapter 3, suggests that those with a care focus, or maternal thinking, are more likely to be non-violent.

Detailed study of individual narratives does not bear this out, and challenges any assumption of a link between non-violent action and one specific moral perspective. For my respondents, the choice to act non-violently arose from those with both a connected and those with a separate sense of self, and from both justice and care perspectives, and from those who integrated both. The process of engagement in non-violent action did appear to foster a greater awareness of the importance of connection and relationship, but the underlying perspectives remained the same. In these narratives there did appear to be some relationship between moral perspective and thinking on the limits of the use of non-violence. Those with a justice or integrated perspective appeared to find violence more acceptable in certain limited circumstances than those with a care

perspective. However, this relationship appeared to be confounded by the influence of historical and personal circumstances, creating ambivalence for many of the respondents.

What these narratives showed is that culture, particularly the sub-culture created by the collective itself, can have an overriding influence on the development of a particular moral perspective, but that no one moral perspective is particularly associated with the choice of non-violence. Nor is this choice associated with a particular gender, personality, or religious outlook. Instead, the choice is a product of a complex and fluid combination of all of these.

CONCLUSION

As I stated at the outset, I have made no attempt to produce a single explanatory model of the process of political engagement. In keeping with Allport's suggestion, I have grown impatient with generalisations and have "hastened to the internal pattern".[1] Through examining the life histories of activists in three anti-militarist movements that emerged in the 1980s, I have been able to explore the relevance of various generalisations about political commitment to a specific type of political engagement occurring in a particular historic period. I have also been able to suggest three possible models for the process of engagement in non-violent collective action. I have stressed the need to distinguish violent from non-violent action, pointing out that any attempt to understand engagement in collective action must examine the methods chosen, as these are just as likely to reflect the values and attitudes of the activist as are the objects of protest.

I argued that a qualitative methodology, in particular the use of retrospective narratives, appeared to be the the most suitable way to obtain a clear understanding of a dynamic and interactive process occurring between individual, group and environment over a period. This is the only method that allows the respondents themselves to

---

[1] G. W. Allport, "The General and the Unique in Psychological Science", in *Human Inquiry: A Source Book of New Paradigm Research*, ed. Peter Reason and John Rowan (Chichester: Wiley, 1981), pp. 64--65.

examine the significance of events in their own lives. Hindsight is a necessary component of the search for meaning, and the respondents' interpretation of their coming to commitment is not accessible through structured questionnaires or direct observation.

I focussed particularly on non-violent activists in peace and human rights movements of the 1980s. These movements emerged in different cultures, with similar agendas and similar patterns of action, in response to the global expressions of Cold War militarism. Their primary aims were anti-militarist, challenging either forced conscription or a particular nuclear weapon system. As the movements grew, they began to embrace a wider agenda, including civil liberties and human rights, ecological concerns, and women's issues. These movements could be characterised as "New Social Movements" in that they addressed "basic dilemmas"; concerned themselves with group process and non-violent methods of action; blurred the distinction between private life and public action, so that activism became a way of life; and manifested what Melucci calls a "planetary consciousness".[2] In examining these movements, I also became aware of a common philosophy that I have defined as a "politics of connection". To reiterate, "a politics of connection puts a primary emphasis on relationships. There is a concern with relationships between participants within the movement; between the object

---

[2] A. Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989).

of action and other issues; and with relationships with the perceived opponents. Hence the concern with method as an end in itself. The non-violent methods used by the actors, in rhetorical, symbolic and actual forms, express these relationships, and the choice of non-violence demonstrates a desire to transform rather than disrupt or break relationships. In contrast, the objects of action - military conscription and nuclear weapons - are in all cases seen as, amongst other things, disruptive and deeply harmful to relations within society."[3]

Thus, there are significant differences from those totalitarian and revolutionary movements that provided the basis for some of the explanations of political commitment reviewed in Chapter 3. This may help to account for why these explanations do not fit. I also suggested that, given the constantly changing nature of the political and historical environment, any attempt to produce a global model of protest behaviour is futile.

In particular, these movements with their fluid, egalitarian structures, and emphasis on internal democracy and non-violent process, are the antithesis of the anti-democratic movements that Kornhauser suggested may emerge in times of rapid social transition.[4] However, Kornhauser's stress on alienation is not irrelevant: the Guatemalans are obviously economically marginalised, and all

---

[3] See above, pp. 184--185.

[4] W. Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 33 ff.

my respondents felt alienated from the conventional political processes of their country, which appeared to exclude them because of ethnicity, gender or political ideology; they also felt alienated because of the failure of those in power to address what the respondents saw as fundamental issues. Yet the process of engagement led not to revolutionary destabilisation but to greater involvement in attempts to transform the political process and, in some cases, to direct engagement in conventional politics at a local or national level.

I shall now summarise the way my findings challenge the other established models that explain political engagement. Taking the structural approach first, the enormous social inequities that existed in Guatemala, and the severe political repression in both that country and Poland, may well have contributed to the widespread social disturbances that occurred in both countries in the early 1980s. Yet, after the failure of these movements, more severe repression followed, and yet only a tiny proportion of those subject to these conditions mobilised, nor was there any evidence that it was in response to a perception of "relative deprivation". Mobilisation was often on behalf of others more directly affected by the process of militarisation, and at the expense of the activists' own relative wellbeing. Structural theories do not deal adequately with this kind of pro-social, or altruistic, behaviour.

Resources were significant to my respondents. Access to networks, information and particular skills played a role

in facilitating engagement. But the availability of resources was not sufficient in itself to explain mobilisation. It was clear that many of my respondents felt emotionally and cognitively engaged for some period before they were able to find the resources to act. Nor does resource mobilisation theory explain the attraction of a particular issue to a particular person, or why many with easy access to resources did not act.

An additional problem was that all these theories treat a movement as a unified entity, with a homogeneous membership whose reasons for engagement were identical. My findings confirm the views of those writers who stress the heterogeneity of membership, and the wide variety of attitudes and motivations that push people into action around a common cause. Moreover, in keeping with Mankoff and Flacks,[5] my research also shows that movements can recruit members with different agendas at different points in their life cycle. Thus, for example, Mary's agenda at the outset of her march to Greenham was purely anti-nuclear. Mary's views developed to embrace a feminist agenda. Diana, at a later date, was attracted by both the feminism and the anti-nuclear stance of the movement Mary had helped to create. Darek joined WiP to revitalise the Polish political opposition, Magda, two years later, to campaign against nuclear power.

---

[5] Milton Mankoff and Richard Flacks, "The Changing Basis of the American Student Movement", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 395 (May 1971), pp. 54--67.

However, although I stressed the importance of understanding the individual, my research did not provide much evidence for those theorists who locate the process of engagement entirely within the individual, divorced from his or her historical and social context. I found no evidence that reaching a particular stage in the life cycle was the most significant precipitant of action. Certainly, Darek and Diana became engaged as adolescents, and the vulnerabilities and possibilities of that period clearly played a role in facilitating their commitment. But other respondents' narratives show that there are other significant periods of opportunity, such as that which occurs for women when children go to school, or for either sex when an employment opportunity ends. It is, as Erikson suggests, the psychohistorical moment[6] - the coincidence of these particular moments in an individual's life story with particular historic events - that appears to be mobilising. Moreover, if the event is overwhelming, the respondent may well act to create an opportunity for engagement, regardless of personal convenience or the appropriateness for their personal life course.

Regarding the importance of different personality traits, the most significant finding from my work is the challenge it makes to the psychopathological explanation of political commitment. My respondents' narratives did not support this explanatory model. What they did show is that,

---

[6] Erik H. Erikson, *Life History and the Historical Moment* (New York: Norton, 1975), pp. 196--199.

while traumatic experiences in childhood are not essential to later engagement, when they do occur their contribution to the process of engagement appears to be the opposite of that suggested by Lasswell.[7] For my respondents, activism was not the expression of redirected affects produced by repressed childhood hostilities. They were aware of their childhood hurts and saw this awareness as fostering their capacity for empathy. In addition, their knowledge of their own survivorhood increased their sense of personal efficacy, which contributed to their preparedness for engagement.

My research is in keeping with many of the findings of the research done on activists in the youth movements of the 1960s and the anti-nuclear movements of the 1980s. This is not surprising given these movements' shared agendas and similar methods of action. In common with the 1960s' studies, I found that parental, and grandparental, values were a more significant influence than political ideology. My respondents were also intelligent, resilient and tended to be socially engaged from an early age. However, my study suggests that movements can arise in a wide variety of social backgrounds, not simply amongst a middle class elite. Regarding the cognitive work of the anti-nuclear studies, I pointed out the difficulties raised by its cross-sectional nature. For my respondents, what emerges from their longitudinal narratives is that personal efficacy appears to precede political engagement, and that the engagement

---

[7] Harold Lasswell, *The Political Writings of Harold D. Lasswell* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1951).

transforms personal efficacy into political efficacy. And engagement appears, in part, to be a way of sustaining issue saliency in order to sustain further engagement.

The main aim of the study was not, however, simply to test the validity of various theories about political mobilisation, but, rather, to focus on a hitherto neglected aspect, namely. the process of engagement itself, rather than the conditions producing activism or the characteristics of those engaged.

Three overlapping process models have emerged from the narratives: for the majority of my respondents engagement arises as a personal response to a particular historic event. For some of these engagement centres around a crucial episode, that is, a qualitative shift of attitude and behaviour taking place in a time-limited period. The particular nature of the historic event, and the personal history of the respondent, are such that he or she is suddenly aware of the personal significance of a public event. She feels herself to be threatened and vulnerable, or else has a sense of empathic connection to someone she sees as threatened. The sense of vulnerability breaks down numbing. The respondent now perceives her personal situation to have a wider political significance and is motivated to act. Action occurs if the resources are available. According to this model, fear plays a mobilising role, and is most powerful when it is fear of a future or imagined event.

In the second model, which applies to three of the

Guatemalans, fear is inhibiting. This model also depends on a sense of empathic or personal connection to historic events. But the process is far more gradual, because the sense of powerlessness and terror created by overwhelming events has to be overcome. Indeed, it is probably numbing to public events that has facilitated survival. It is the reduction of repression, the opening of political space, and the emergence of issues that appear soluble, that allows the process of engagement to proceed.

For the third group empathy and fear are not significant factors in the process. These are a small group for whom abstract principles of social justice and other concerns are important from an early age, and who have a strong sense of personal efficacy.

The validity of these models is certainly confined to these particular movements at this period. But, while they cannot be applied elsewhere, they can suggest certain pointers for further studies. All three routes to commitment challenge Kohlberg's model of moral engagement as a purely cognitive process. Both cognitive and affective factors are important. All three models appear to involve some kind of prior cognitive processing, and at some point the intense arousal of affect, be it anger, sorrow or compassion.

Secondly, all three models show that commitment cannot be explained away either as the result of intra-psychic processes or simply as a response to external conditions. It is the unique interaction between history and the

individual over varying periods that creates engagement. In this respect, history is not background context against which engagement takes place: it is an essential player. This work suggests that particular historic moments may be more significant than general conditions. Without that particular event, this person would not have become engaged. Conversely, this moment only mobilised those individuals, rather than others, because of who that person was.

Finally, the choice of non-violence as a means of action. I have argued for the necessity of examining the choice of method because the decision whether or not to act at all depends on the availability and attractiveness of different methods. Political non-violence, for example, because of its non-instrumental nature, is most effective as a collective act. Therefore, actors require resources that enable them to initiate a collective, or to join one. My respondents' narratives show that, for some, a decision to act was followed by a long delay before they found a suitable collective to join; others had immediate access to networks that facilitated action.

Choosing non-violence is a choice about central purpose, which thus entails moral thinking and reflects fundamental aspects of self definition. On the basis of the literature on empathy, moral orientation and sense of self, I hypothesised that those who chose non-violence would be more likely to be empathic, have a care-focussed moral orientation and a connected sense of self. Some of the literature suggested that this constellation was more likely

to occur in women. Other literature suggested that it was the actual practice of caretaking activities, or maternal practise[8] - both more likely in our society to be done by women - that produced this orientation.[9] A third suggestion was that the experience of interdependence and community that arises from resisting oppression was key to the creation of 'social individuality',[10] a concept similar to that of a connected self. I pointed out that these explanations are not mutually exclusive.

My respondents' narratives both challenged and extended the possibilitites. Accounts of their pre-activist lives showed that all of them had the experience of living within and drawing some value from "extensive" communities, that is, communities or families that encouraged open attitudes to others and a sense of responsibility for them, be this the institutional setting of a children's home, extended family life, or the communal values of Maya society, Catholic Poland, or the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Secondly, it is clear that both justice and care-focussed moral reasoning can underlie the choice to act non-violently, and that individuals, of both genders, with both

---

[8] Sarah Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1989), p. 17.

[9] Joan C. Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12 (1987).

[10] M. Brinton Lykes, "The Caring Self: Social Experiences of Power and Powerlessness" in *Who Cares? Theory Research and Educational Implications of the Ethic of Love*, ed M. Brabek (New York: Prager, 1989), p. 167.

a connected and separate sense of self, do so. However, in keeping with Bardige's work, justice and care perspectives did appear to be related to my respondents' understanding of the limits of non-violence. Those with a justice or an integrated perspective saw non-violence as a more limited method and were more tolerant, in theory, of the use of violence. This may be because the principle of self defence - which was the most common justification for violence - was more easily drawn upon by those valuing fairness and equity as values in themselves, than by those emphasising concern for others.

The explanatory models proposed by Lykes, Tronto and Ruddick all help to make sense of some aspects of my respondents' narratives: in particular, the fact that the actual process of engagement and practice of non-violence enhances a connected sense of self in all of them. There is an interactive relationship between movement and individual, and it would appear that "Involvement in the transformation of oppressive structures, in which one acts . . . serve[s] to concretise an abstract sense of oneself as an 'ensemble of social relations'".[11] Margaret's and Mary's narratives are in keeping with the suggestion that maternal practice and caretaking enhance a care-focussed morality. So, interestingly, is Darek's acknowledgement that his concept of responsibility changed, through the care of his son, from one of duty to response to need. This raises the possibility that practice may be more significant than

---

[11] Lykes, "The Caring Self", p. 167.

gender. Darek's narrative also suggests that maternal practice would need to be sustained to have a sustained effect.

What my narratives do not suggest is that one gender is more inclined towards non-violence than the other, or even that gender *per se* is associated with a particular kind of non-violence. The counterfactual cases of Janek and Magda should be noted. Janek's exemplifies the importance of the "pull" of the issue, Magda's the significance of culture. That is not to say that gender cannot, in some circumstances, be the basis of a particular set of sub-cultural values, as exemplified by Greenham, but the creation of this particular sub-culture was a political choice on the part of those women involved.

In fact, for all my respondents, culture, including the sub-cultures created out of ethnicity and religion, was the overriding influence on their moral focus and sense of self, and thus appeared as one of the main determinants of their choice of non-violence and of which non-violent tactics should be used.

Overall, the main finding of my work is that the available global models of commitment do not have much useful explanatory power when trying to understand the actual process of engagement. Reasons for this have been suggested. Narrowing the focus to a specific kind of action in a specific period still leaves one with complexity and heterogeneity that can only be fully explained through the

study of the individual case.

The other main finding is that history cannot be relegated to background context. The process of engagement is the process of engagement **with** an historic event as public events become personally meaningful and the individual moves from private to public space. Therefore, studies of commitment cannot confine themselves either to purely intra-psychic processes or to external factors. They must look at the relationship between the two.

Traumatic experiences are not essential to later commitment, but, if they occur, they can, in the right circumstances, help foster a capacity for empathy and for creative survival strategies that enhance personal efficacy. Empathy has been seen to be important but not essential in the process of engagement. Non-violence can arise from different moral perspectives and in both genders.

Fear has a significant role in motivation, which varies in different political contexts. It can be mobilising for those not directly experiencing overwhelming terror. In the latter case it can be paralysing, although the memory of that terror can be recruited to sustain later engagement.

All these suggestions arise from the detailed study of twelve peace and human rights activists working in the 1980s. With the emergence of a new wave of protest around ecological issues in this country, much of which draws on the example of a sustained occupation provided by Greenham, it may be that the process models developed here can be applied and adapted to this new generation of activists.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARIES OF RESPONDENTS' POLITICAL COMMITMENTS

I have summarised the histories of active engagement up to 1992 for all twelve respondents. These histories follow on from those given in Chapter 6 that described formative experiences, and provide background information relevant to all the other chapters.

Guatemala

Rosa is a Maya woman from the Quiche region of Guatemala. At the time I first interviewed her in 1990 she was 29 and living with her parents. One year later she had moved to the city, married and was pregnant with her first child.

In the early 1980, while Rosa was away from her community living on the coast, the catechist was killed. She was absolutely clear about her duty to leave the relative safety of the coast and return to her community to take his place. Her work as a catechist, with her emphasis on the use of her own language - Quiche - and her encouragement of women, brought her into conflict with the hierarchy again and led to "expulsion" from her local church. This time she did not object: having acquired a reputation in the wider community, she was now interested in talking to and organising with women. By now it was 1987 and she had the support of another radical clergyman in

Chichicastenango and access to a weekly local Catholic radio programme which she used for talks. She found herself making connections between the Virgin's suffering and loss of her son Jesus and the losses of the increasing numbers of widows and orphans around her. On visits to the cantons women would talk to her about their losses and sacrifices, and while listening and empathising with their grief she had the idea of creating some form of self-help group.

She decided to set up a widows' group, initiating it by calling, with the help of the priest and the local radio, a widow's mass on the Virgin's day, 10 May 1988. The mass was held in Chichicastenango. She was astounded at how many came: some hundreds from all the surrounding communities. The cost of the mass, however, was that the Bishop was harrassed by army and civil patrols into leaving the community for fear of his life. The widows and Rosa were also harassed. But at this time they joined up with other grass roots initiatives to form a larger widows' organisation (CONAVIGUA) and Rosa found herself elected vice-president.

When I returned in January 1992 CONAVIGUA had grown to be one of the largest and most effective popular movements in the country. Rosa was clearly a central figure in the organisation, organising a conference and a large march, working hard in the background, and obviously loved and respected by all.

In addition to continuing on the board of CONAVIGUA, she has, with others, set up an indigenous rights group

called Majawil Q'ij, or New Awakening. The idea for this came out of organising and attending the Continental Conferences for Indigenous and Popular movements in the Americas. She had attended the first in Quito and had been one of the main organisers for the second, in Guatemala, in October 1991. She also saw that, while indigenous people participated in many groups, they had none that specifically spoke for them. The idea of Mahawil Q'ij is to provide a coordinating group for indigenous Guatemalans involved in other groups; Rosa represents CONAVIGUA. Its aims are to help the most repressed and terrorised sections of Guatemalan society recover a sense of dignity through increasing their knowledge and understanding of their own cultures, languages and traditions. Rosa is convinced that this increase in self-respect must be the first step in organising against repression and injustice. Her particular interest has been encouraging women. Activities have included organising a seminar for Maya women and publishing and circulating its proceedings.

Rosa recently got married to someone also involved in human rights work. Currently they manage to spend one week in every three together. The rest of the time she is travelling and organising, setting up local groups, organising seminars, doing office work. She is pregnant and admits that the birth of the baby may mean she has to slow down, and she is looking forward to its arrival, but drily reminded me that the women working on the *fincas* have no such luxury as taking time off for childbirth.

Pedro was a single Maya man of 28 when I first interviewed him in 1990, and lived with his parents in the province of Quiche. The following year he moved into the town and shared a flat with a fellow member of CERJ.

In 1983 the Army came to Pedro's village bringing food and promises of a new relationship between them and the people. A civil patrol was formed and Pedro, like the rest of the community, accepted it, hoping that this would mean the violence would diminish. But the violence grew worse, and patrollers were particularly vulnerable. Two incidents stand out in is mind: on one occasion the army lined up the patrollers and a hooded figure walked along identifying "subversives." Four men were singled out and interrogated and badly beaten. On another occasion, when Pedro was away at the coast, his patrol were ordered to kill some men identified as guerillas. The men knew the victims were not guerillas, but were told if they refused the order they would be killed themselves, so they carried it out. Pedro thinks that from fear he might have done likewise. Patrolling was initially every fortnight. Pedro, like others, paid someone to patrol for him while he was on the coast.

In 1986, with the election of Cerezo, his community heard the rumour that patrolling was voluntary. However, petitions to the military commander to stop patrolling were met with threats. In 1988, however, Pedro heard of a neighbouring community that had completely ceased patrolling. Their method had been to bypass the army and

send a petition direct to the President, the Ministry of Defense and the Procurator for Human Rights. They had been helped by a local school teacher. Pedro and some friends made contact with the teacher, Amilcar Mendez, who showed them how to set about a similar process. This was Pedro's first experience of seeing that the constituition and law could be used to his benefit. His community met and the majority decided they would stop patrolling. They have continued to refuse in spite of continuing harrassment and threats from the local military.

By the middle of 1988 the loose network of communities that had stopped patrolling decided to form an organisation, in order to have their interests represented more clearly. Pedro was made vice-president and became increasingly involved in educating villagers about their human rights and in visiting the city to argue with officials. In 1990 he was dividing his time between his small piece of land and the office. By 1992 he had moved into town to live near the office and was working full time. He was still single. Work now includes speaking tours abroad, organising courses on human rights, sitting in the office taking testimony, and coordinating action with other grass roots groups.

When I interviewed her in 1990 **Christina** was a single woman of 28 living with her family and working for an agricultural cooperative. The journey from home to the office takes three hours by foot and bus and she would do this for each meeting. The following year she was spending more time away

from home, because of political work, and sleeping in friends' houses.

Christina's engagement in CERJ occurred initially because of concern for her two brothers, particularly one who was ill with depression. She had had no previous involvement with any form of political action. A group were meeting in her village, discussing the possibility of stopping patrolling, and she joined them to study the constitution and share her ideas. The group often met in her house and, as with Pedro's community, sought Amilcar's help and participated in founding CERJ. At the founding meeting, Christina was elected onto the executive, which surprised and pleased her although she was concerned about the responsibility.

Over the next two years Christina became increasingly involved with CERJ, juggling work in the office with looking after her elderly parents and sibs. However, in 1992, with the planned celebrations of Columbus's arrival in the Americas, she, like many others - including Rosa - found herself increasingly interested in and concerned about her peoples' identity as indigenous Maya. Like Rosa she joined the New Awakening, as a representative of CERJ, and uses the opportunity both to educate herself and others through discussions and cultural events. *We're not learning about these things from books*, she explained, but from old people and priests in the community.

Continual problems with ill health in her family (and with her own health) meant that she had had to take some

months off work to take care of them. Money for medicine is a continual anxiety as she only gets expenses for her human rights work. However, by the time of my second interview in 1992, she was re-engaged in CERJ and planning to go on a speaking tour in Europe.

Francisco was a single Maya man of 22, living as a caretaker in the CERJ office, when I did the first interview in 1990. By 1992 he had moved away to work for another organisation and lived mainly in his village.

Francisco was in the civil patrols from the ages of 15 to 22.

> *We had to patrol every five days. So we realised we were just wasting our time. Sometimes we were sent up to the mountains and, because it was so far, we might be away for two or three days just hanging about. We saw there was nothing up there, no reason to be there. And we knew that in the constitution it says that it's not obligatory to patrol and we were wasting time; we thought: "why are we doing this?"*

Like Pedro, he had heard the rumours of patrolling being voluntary, and so he and others got in touch with CERJ, newly formed, and wrote out a petition. In Francisco's village, however, only eight men, all relatives, decided not to patrol. This made them much more vulnerable to harrassment.

In 1990 Amilcar Mendez offered Francisco a job as caretaker at the office, which he took. After he had been away from home a month, his mother, who had joined the widow's group CONAVIGUA, was shot dead in her house, and his

stepfather wounded, by two military commisssioners. The whole of Francisco's extended family then moved to the CERJ office for safety and the case became a major human rights issue. I first interviewed him the night after this event.

After two years of working in the office of CERJ, Francisco, feeling increasingly exploited by Mendez, had a disagreement and left. Shortly afterwards he began working for CUC, the peasants' trade union. He attended a training course and now gives talks in local communities on subjects like using organic fertilisers and explaining human rights. He is much happier working in CUC, where he feels valued, although the work is unpaid, which means that, periodically, he returns home to look after his fields.

Britain

Diana was a single woman of 20, working for a pacifist magazine, when I first interviewed her in 1989. By the time of my final interview in 1991, she was working in London while waiting to go to Oxford to read politics, philosophy and economics (PPE).

Diana's first political action was at age 10 when she organised a petition against seal killing. She has difficulty remembering what inspired her but thinks it was probably a television programme. The whole school signed and the local press quoted her as saying *they had as much a right to live on this earth as we did and they shouldn't be*

killing them. When she was eleven she joined national CND and started a Youth CND group with some friends. The group *organised the double deckers to go to CND demos and things like that. . . . leafleting and street stuff and stalls at peace festivals.* Involvement in CND was combined with a growing concern about other issues, such as animal rights - she became a vegetarian at twelve - and womens' issues, which she quickly discovered were not as acceptable to the authorities as a peace group. She remembers particularly trying to put up a poster that she had been given advertising a lesbian and gay march, which, unlike her CND posters, was immediately taken down. *Suddenly this was not allowed. I think that took a few of us aback as to why it is, that why it was that certain things were acceptable and certain things weren't.*

She went to a women's history group but found it *totally boring and patronising.* However, at fourteen, she was participating in "Reclaim the Night Marches" *because they captured my imagination. . . it was nice to see groups of women walking through the streets saying "we should be able to walk through the streets safely, no matter how we're dressed", because I had at that age become aware that the world wasn't such a safe place as I had thought it was when I was a child.*

By now she had also heard about Greenham and seen it on television. Living reasonably near it was not difficult to go to Greenham regularly, each time feeling more involved and wanting to stay longer. By the time she was 16, in

1985, she had decided to stay at the camp full-time and not do her A-levels. It was a conflict because part of her enjoyed intellectual work, but *compared to what else I wanted to do they didn't stand a chance.*

She remained at camp for three years. By this time, cruise missiles were sited there and Diana, frustrated by the exhausting process of sitting up at night in case they were taken out on exercise, became quite skilled at watching the base and predicting when exercises would occur. She would also follow the convoys down to Salisbury Plain and stay doing her own actions, sometimes alone, sometimes with others until the convoy returned.

In 1988, she felt she had been at the camp long enough and took a job with the pacifist magazine "Peace News." By now she was clear that she was committed *to a non-violent way of life.* She continued to involve herself with Cruisewatch and to go down to Salisbury plain when the convoy came out. By 1990 she had decided she would like to study more and accepted a place at a college for mature women. After a year there, during which she remained in contact with Greenham women and involved herself in protests against the Gulf War, she obtained a place at Oxford to read PPE.

Mary had recently moved back to London in order to be more involved in women's politics, particularly the abortion issue, when I first interviewed her in 1989. She was 56.

However, by 1991, she had returned to the north of England and was no longer engaged in any form of collective action.

Mary's first engagement in politics was in 1979 when she joined an anti-nuclear alliance in her area, having heard that the government intended to bury nuclear waste in her region. *I didn't want nuclear waste dumped on my door step, it was that simple.* However, what actually pushed her into more active engagement was hearing of a blockade by four people of a train carrying nuclear waste. *That was a very key moment. Because it actually made me do something political: which was collect money for their support.* After this she joined the Labour party, seeing it as one way to work. With the growth of the anti-nuclear weapons movement in the early 1980s she realised that nuclear weapons was as great a threat as nuclear waste, and she increasingly focussed her energy on this issue.

Her decision to join the march to Greenham Common was also precipitated by a key moment: when driving through the countryside she suddenly had an intense image of what it would look like after a nuclear war. She realised then that she would have to put all her energy into stopping nuclear war happening. During the two-week march she made a further decision to take direct action at the base and, when the idea of a peace camp arose, she became one of the small group of women that kept it going during the first year, dividing her time between the camp and her five children at home. During the second year, as the number of women increased, and media attention grew, Mary, because of her

forthright and humourous speaking style and the fact that she was one of the founder members, was increasingly treated as a spokesperson for the camp, which sometimes caused friction with the other women. In addition, although now involved in a relationship with a woman herself, and separated from her husband, Mary's political focus remained cruise missiles, and she was impatient with the feminist politics of some of the other women.

In 1983 she moved away from living full-time at the camp to involve herself more directly with national CND and the Labour party. She and other women organised a court case against President Reagan over the deployment of cruise missiles which drew attention to the size of the American military presence in Britain. For the next three years she continued living in London and involving herself in peace movement politics.

However, in 1986 the rape of two women at another peace camp by men in the peace movement helped to crystallise another shift of perspective. Mary increasingly began to feel that violence against women was the fundamental issue and that the peace movement's failure to deal with it was part of its failure to deal with missiles. She got herself elected as a vice-chair of CND purely to raise the issue, but left in frustration after six months. She returned to Greenham for two short periods in 1986 and 1987 but felt uncomfortable there and moved with her partner to the north of England. In 1988 and 1989 she took little part in any political work. Her relationship with her partner ended,

causing considable pain. However, when I interviewed her at the end of that year she was looking for a way to re-engage, particularly on the issues of abortion and pornography. At my last interview in 1991 she still had not found a way to do this satisfactorily, putting her failure down to her own laziness.

Margaret is an organic gardener, living with her husband and children on a smallholding near Newbury. All my interviews were conducted at her home. In 1989 she was 46.

Margaret feels that her own political awareness began to grow along with many other peoples' in the early 1970s. Quaker Meeting provided the opportunity for talks and study groups on any issue that a member wished. Thus she and her husband became involved in Friends of the Earth: *I woke up to the environment and the fact that the world is finite. . . . I was staggered at my own ignorance, actually.* Another influence was the *stable and rooted* world she had got involved with through organic gardening. Margaret herself helped to start the Amnesty International group, having heard a speaker at Yearly Meeting who made her realise that *governments weren't always nice kind fatherly [things].*

She did not involve herself in a local and successful campaign against heavy tanker aircraft being brought to the local airbase, feeling it was a "Not in My Backyard" campaign. However, with the announcement that cruise missiles would be sited at Greenham Common next to the town, Margaret felt it was impossible to turn a blind eye and

joined the newly formed anti-nuclear group "Newbury Campaign Against Cruise Missiles" (NCACM). Thus, when the women's march from Cardiff arrived, she was part of the group that met and accompanied it up to the base. She admired the womens' *guts* but did not consider joining in the direct action.

She became increasingly involved in supporting the camp, even though its existence had proved divisive in the local campaign group, particularly the decision to be women-only. She felt that the women were doing what the campaign should have been doing - focussing on the missiles' presence. Even so, as the camp became more feminist and radical, she found herself initially *petrified* as a *nice middle class housewife trying to explain it to the local community*.

However, as time passed, her own involvement changed from support to direct involvement in actions such as cutting into the base. Her work as a gardener allowed her the flexibility to be at the base whenever needed. In particular, once the missiles were deployed she was instrumental in setting up the telephone trees that were the start of Cruisewatch and, in the five years of exercises, missed only three convoys, always managing to stage a personal protest in the first few miles of the journey.

Her stability and longstanding involvement with the camp made her a bridge between women and the local community. She persuaded Quakers to help concretely by providing laundry and washing facilities and, during the

later years when evictions were regular occurrences, became involved in mediating with the police to diminish the bailiffs' violence. She also became increasingly involved in the legal issues surrounding the base. Firstly, in challenging the by-laws and then, after the INF treaty in 1987, acting as a link between women and the commoners who were trying to ensure that the base would be returned to common land after the missiles were removed. She was one of the few women to win an acquittal in the magistrates' court for cutting into the base, arguing her case on the basis of rights of access.

With the ending of Cruisewatch and NCACM in 1990, Margaret has become increasingly interested in ethics and theology and in what women have to contribute in those areas. She continues to be very active with the Quakers and is turning her attention to other issues, such as world hunger.

Anna, aged 26, was spending her vacation from college acting as temporary caretaker of Friends Meeting House in Newbury and hoping to get into Oxford when I interviewed her in 1989. She was still participating in occasional actions at the camp.

Anna had a difficult period on leaving the home at the age of 18. She had had little formal schooling and no qualifications. Her institutionalisation was such that, like many of her friends, she considered joining the forces, but decided against it because of an intuitive dislike of what

the military represented. She found herself living in the middle of Huddersfield, in a high rise flat with few friends and *no prospects*. A series of unsatisfying jobs was followed by an unproductive period in a therapeutic community, during which she formed a relationship with a drug abuser, became addicted to heroin, and overdosed.

However, there were two significant events in that year. The first came with the sinking of the HMS Sheffield, during the Falklands' war. She saw the news on television, and her horror at the futility of people dying over some islands was exacerbated by anxiety that two of her friends from the home who were in the Navy might have gone down with the ship. She wanted to act, yet felt she lacked the resources and contacts to do so.

The second significant event was her decision, after seeing a poster, to organise a coach from the community to join the "Embrace the Base" action at Greenham Common in December 1982 (where women were protesting against cruise missiles). She found herself demonstrating with 30,000 women. It impressed her and she did not want to leave, yet at that point joining the encampment did not appear as an option: she knew she was anti-war but felt completely ignorant.

She decided to enrol at a college of further education to obtain some O-levels. Once there she gained the friendship and support of a female lecturer who gave her accommodation. In this environment she was able to get herself off heroin. She made friends with two lesbian women

and came out herself as a lesbian. She channelled her frustrations at the limitations of institutional authority into a student campaign for a creche. She was then elected president of the students union. This meant she was now in touch with a network of information and she started visiting Greenham regularly. She moved down permanently to Greenham in the late summer of 1984, after obtaining her O-levels.

At just the point when Anna decided to commit herself full-time, many of the original campers were deciding to leave. Moreover, the camp at this time was under heavy pressure, with frequent evictions taking place, and violent physical harassment by bailiffs, police and local vigilantes. Yet she felt powerful, and she is quite clear that the main attraction of Greenham was the issue: the chance directly to oppose nuclear weapons.

During her time at the camp Anna was almost continually engaged in action. She built up a body of knowledge and expertise about the functioning of the underground command and control network, discovering previously hidden establishments. She organised a new peace camp outside the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Aldermaston, making frequent actions to challenge and publicise the building of a new research facility involving the processing of plutonium. The AWRE has a notoriously poor safety record and connections have been made between its presence and the increased incidence of Leukaemia in the area. Frequently arrested and imprisoned, she became skilled at defending

herself in court and succeeded in establishing positive relationships with individual magistrates and police.

However, Anna became increasingly unhappy with the approach of some women at the camp, and the eruption of a major split between women crystallised her decision to stop living at the camp on a permanent basis, and to accept the offer of a research job on a political weekly. The offer had arisen as a direct result of the information she had gathered on nuclear facilities. Anna had discovered that she had a talent for research, and its rejection by some women who did not see it as either *important* or as *a womens' way of working* she also found problematic.

The research job provided a new way to work. While there she was encouraged to apply to a mature students' college and suceeded in obtaining a place. After one year there she applied to Oxford University and got in. Because of her own experience in care and in prison for actions at Greenham, she had decided to pursue a career in penal reform. She continues to remain in touch with Greenham women.

Poland

When I interviewed **Magda** in 1989 she was in the process of turning part of her apartment in Gdansk into an art gallery, and involved in setting up a women's section for Solidarity and in discussions over the restructuring of WiP. She was

28. By 1991, when I met her again, she had moved with her partner to Warsaw and was president of the newly-founded Polish Amnesty, which took up most of her time.

In spite of her acts of individual rebellion at school, Magda saw herself as totally apolitical until she went to university. There she met her boyfriend and from him gained a new perspective on Polish history, learning of events that no-one had discussed with her before, such as the Warsaw uprising. She participated in the student strike as a matter of course. However, martial law came *as a complete shock*, and affected her personally: she was unable to make a planned trip to Russia. This was the first time her personal freedom had been limited and she realised that political events in some way concerned her. She joined in the demonstrations and protests, again not regarding this as political action but as a *citizen's duty . . . to let them see that we are here.* And she was shocked and angry at the brutality of the police.

During the early 1980s Magda wanted to get engaged in politics but could not find a way. She felt that Solidarity was both elitist and too conspiratorial. Even if one managed to make contact one could not get involved in the political discussion, only with the mundane tasks. It was only in 1987, when Magda heard about WiP, that she became involved. WiP appealed to her because of its openness, because of the way it worked, immediately involving her in the discussion, and because of the issues with which it was concerned. She felt that she had instinctively been against

the army and nuclear technology all her life and WiP gave her a concrete possibility to act. Her first action was to solicit signatures for a petition in protest against the building of a nuclear power plant nearby.

Because part of WiP's role was contact with the West and Magda spoke fluent English, she found herself increasingly involved and taking increasing responsibility for sustaining the movement. WiP also, through its contacts with women in the West, introduced her to feminist politics for the first time and she became increasingly aware of sexist practices around her.

Magda played a central role in 1989 in trying to create an enduring structure and role for WiP, after the transformation that occurred with the change of government. This was not successful, but in the meantime she had accepted a job with the Solidarity trade union as organiser of a women's section. This job went well but, as the women's section became more visible and articulate and began to pay attention to issues such as abortion, there was increasing conflict with the trade union hierarchy. Magda, finding her own position as a paid employee untenable, resigned in the spring of 1991. Shortly afterwards she was elected president of the newly founded Polish Amnesty International group. When I last interviewed her in September 1991 she was working full time on building the membership and devising a pilot scheme for the teaching of human rights in Polish schools.

Piotr is a doctor. He is married and lives with his wife and five children in a three room apartment. When I first interviewed him in 1989 he was 31, doing three jobs - in a health centre by day and an emergency clinic at night - in order to make ends meet.

His first political action was when he was 16. A group of teachers at his school were dismissed for signing a protest at proposed amendments in the Polish constitution. He knew little about the politics but he was aware that these were the best teachers in the school, both *professionally* and *morally*. He felt it was his duty to do something and he organised a petition to send to the First Secretary of the Communist party. The petition was not successful in reinstating the teachers, but Piotr saw it as successful in other ways. It brought together the most interesting students and made them all more mature.

Following that, he helped a relative who was in underground publishing. Then, with the birth of Solidarity, in 1980 when he was already at medical school, he became the leader of his section of Student Solidarity (NZS). Martial law came as *a complete shock*. Because of his involvement in the student strike he had been away from home at a meeting the night of 13 December when the police came to arrest him. After that he was in hiding until the rector of his university arranged an amnesty and he was able to go on with his studies. He continued with some underground activities, doing some publishing on a very small scale with some friends.

In 1985, with other old friends from NZS, he helped organise the week-long fast and seminar that began WiP. The seminar was very important, giving him a chance to focus deeply on ideas to which he had previously not given much attention, such as militarism, and to look at the connections between peace and freedom. As WiP grew Piotr became increasingly involved with organisation rather than actions. In particular he took responsibility for finances. As WiP had no structure, finance meetings were the main meetings of the group and Piotr found himself trying to compromise between two increasingly divergent groups: anarchists who favoured spontaneity and wanted no kind of representation; and those, including his own friends in Warsaw, who wished for a more structured approach. In addition he represented WiP abroad at an international peace convention. In 1988, having handed over financial responsibility, he joined the second group in establishing "Future Times" and gradually withdrew from WiP which he felt had achieved its main goal with the change of law on alternative service in 1988.

With the transformation of society that took place in 1989, the Future Times group nominated Piotr as a possible deputy for the parliament. He was not selected, but in the meantime he had restarted and was chair of a Solidarity branch at his work place, *also because of duty. There came time that there was the time to organise Solidarity in my workplace and so I did it.* He actually felt that he was more interested in the problems of good health care

provision than in the amount of pay given to employees, and was looking for ways to work in this area when I saw him in the autumn of 1989. He had also had an offer to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as other WiP colleagues were doing, WiP's internationalism in the previous years having in some senses prepared them for this work.

By 1991 he had made the decision to focus on medicine. He had little involvement in public activities except for the trade union at work, which was winding down, and a continuing interest in health care reform. He felt he had two vocations: one was to be a good father, and the second a good doctor, providing safety and support for both his family and his patients.

Darek was 30 separated, and living with his 7-year-old son in his parents home, when I first interviewed him in 1989.

Darek's engagement with politics began quite suddenly in 1977, while he was still at school. He had been moved by the death, in police custody, of a young theology student, and began to participate in oppositional activities, first by attending alternative classes in history, politics, and literature, organised by the illegal independent student union (SKS). Together with a friend, he organised an exhibition and attended a demonstration in 1978 to mark the anniversary of Polish independence. However, the police broke up the course and it was only because of support from his head teacher that he was not expelled from school.

At university he continued with underground activities, producing and distributing leaflets. He had his first arrest and found that he had the strength to cope with it. Then, with the birth of Solidarity in 1980, he was naturally involved in establishing NZS, the founding meeting of the Krakow branch taking place in his room. He was elected to the national commitee and became completely exhausted so that martial law came almost as a relief. He avoided arrest on the night of the 13th December 1981 and, with other NZS friends, started a students group for the defence of democracy. He was arrested and interned at the end of January.

On leaving prison eight months later his hatred for the system was so great that for some time he toyed with the idea of joining the illegal Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) and actually fighting for Polish independence. However, after two or three months he realised that there were not the means for an insurrection, thus there was no logic in making independence the main goal from which all else followed.

By 1985 Darek was feeling, like others, that Solidarity had become too passive and that there was a need for a new initiative that would draw in young people. Thus he, with nine others, was one of the founders of WiP in Krakow. He is clear that although he was opposed to the ideological indocrination of a communist army he was not necessarily anti-militarist, and at the beginning his interest in the issues of peace and ecology was purely instrumental. The

peace issue was increasingly on the government's agenda, and, through the arrest of Adamkiewicz, on the opposition's agenda as well. Forming a movement was a way to confront government with its own propaganda and to get support from the large peace movements in the West.

As the movement developed, however, he found himself increasingly interested in the role of peace politics in international relations and the different perspectives between East and West. For two years he was the central figure in the Krakow group. However, as internal divisions grew in WiP, he, like Piotr, joined the more intellectually oriented Future Times group. His own perspective on the split was that it was as much a clash between the Solidarity generation, like himself, and a younger group who had grown up during martial law and had a more manichean and fundamentalist approach to politics.

Darek, along with other WiP members, supported the strikes that led to the revival of Solidarity in 1988. By 1989 he had completely withdrawn from WiP and had also decide against a career in medicine, although he had qualified. Instead, he and friends were editing and producing a new journal which he hoped would deal with both culture and politics. He had rejected what he called *the temptation* of being active in state politics, and hoped in this way to be able to stand back and comment on them, for he had many criticisms of the new developments, particularly the lack of democracy. In 1990 he was offered a job as a television news editor, which he took. This went well until

the presidential elections, when, because of political differences with his boss, he was moved to a more senior but less interesting position. He was also increasingly concerned at the political developments in Poland, and in 1991 he decided after all to seek nomination as a deputy for the parliament: he was selected as a candidate by Democratic Union (the party to which most of the former intellectual opposition belonged.)

Janek was a 32-year-old parliamentary deputy from western Poland when I first interviewed him in 1989. He travelled from his home town, where his wife and three children lived, to spend part of the week at the parliament in Warsaw.

Janek's political involvement began as a university student in Czechoslovakia, when he became secretary of the Polish Socialist Students society. This was not out of any commitment to socialism but because he saw a need for Polish students to have some kind of organisation.

During his last two years at school he had become increasingly aware of problems in Polish society. He had begun reading underground publications. One in particular, *The Black Book of Censorship*, which showed the degree to which information was censored, had shocked him and alerted him to the fact that there were serious environmental problems in Poland which people knew nothing about. He thought of switching to environmental studies at university, but it was too difficult.

In the summer of 1980, while the strikes were going on in Poland, he made his first trip to the West. Through discussions with friends and reading more books he felt that *somehow politically I was growing up.* His return to Poland coincided with the signing of the Gdansk agreement and the birth of Solidarity. The political stagnation in Czechoslovakia, when he returned there, where nothing had changed, was in marked contrast to what was happening in Poland. He organised a meeting about the events in Poland and made a speech at the student society saying that some things would have to change within the organisation or he would resign. What bothered him particularly was *falsehood, and the lies, and corruption.* It was *the gap between what young people were told* and reality that made him especially angry. He was aware of the risks of speaking out, that he might be expelled from the university, but did not mind. Nothing changed and a month later he and a number of others resigned. In addition, he wrote about the Polish events in a student newspaper which was immediately stopped by the Czechoslovak security services.

He was not expelled. He completed his studies and returned to Poland and to a job as a teacher in September 1981. Like others, he was upset by the sudden imposition of martial law. His immediate response was to do *some crazy actions,* such as flyposting protests. He felt *very frustrated, very angry, and helpless.* He wanted to do more but initially he had no contacts with the underground. Later he was able to assist one of his friends-in-hiding

with certain tasks. It was through this friend that he met his wife and that he later heard about WiP.

He had done military service and he perceived it as an abuse of human rights, but at first he was not particularly interested in WiP. However, his wife took part in the women's hunger strike organised in protest at the arrest of two members. Shortly afterwards, Janek, his wife, his friend, and a few others initiated a local WiP group. His impulse to deal with environmental issues was reinforced by a visitor from Gdansk who urged them to tackle nuclear power. At first they were unsure if this mattered, but a few weeks later the Chernobyl accident occurred and they realised that this was a key issue. The group organised two street protests and became increasingly integrated and confident.

At Janek's suggestion the group began regular demonstrations demanding the closure of a local chrome factory. He had learned of its dangers from underground environmental bulletins, and sees himself as the main person responsible for putting enviromental issues on WiP's agenda. The WiP group in this city was a closely knit community of about thirty people. Janek felt it functioned like a large extended family, sharing many activities as well as political work.

However, by 1989 this local WiP group was undergoing the same process of fragmentation that was occurring to WiP nationally, and Janek, unhappy with some of the developments in the local group, became less involved. He had already,

in 1987, joined the newly formed Solidarity trade union regional council, seeing it as a place where environmental issues could be raised. To his surprise the local leadership proposed he should stand as a candidate in the 1989 elections. He did so and was elected. He saw his position as a deputy as giving him the opportunity to push both local and national environmental issues. He immediately joined both the environmental and the finance commissions.

He felt that as a deputy he was doing effective and productive work, and two years later was planning to run again *to continue what I have just begun.* In particular he had helped to create legislation protecting the environment, most of which he felt was reasonably satifactory. The biggest problem was the lack of time available to spend with his family. When I interviewed him just before the elections in 1991 he was spending all week at the parliament and the weekend at home.

APPENDIX 2

Interview Protocol 1 (With Sample Questions)

1. Background:

-Name

-Age

-Current living situation

-Current relationships

-Birthplace

-Education, work, etc.

-Religious/spiritual beliefs

-Typical day

2.Involvement with group:

-Can you tell me what were your feelings about the issues of (eg, peace/human rights) before your involvement with the group began?

-How did you first become involved with the group? What was the nature of that initial involvement? Can you remember how it felt at the time? Did you hear someone speak or read an article? Can we go back to that moment: tell me how it feels? Was it a sudden moment or more gradual?

-What happened after you got involved?

-What impact has it had upon your life: personal relationships, family, children, work, study, future goals?

-Has it changed your view of yourself?

-Have the beliefs we discussed earlier altered during your involvement with the group?

-Where does your engagement end? Is there a point at which you intend to pull out?

Efficacy:

-Has your involvement with the group made you feel more effective in obtaining your goals?

-Do you feel more confident in your self?

-Do you feel more effective personally?

Gender issues:

-What's the importance of gender in doing this work?

-Would it be different if you were a man/woman?

-What does feminism mean to you?

-Do women work differently?

-Does this matter?

-Is a separate women's space important?

-Is there a relationship between peace and feminism?

3.Personal History:

(Focus will come from interviewee; issues raised need to be explored in depth.)

Family history:

-Who made up the family when you were growing up?

-Description of each family member (personality, occupation, etc.)

-Relationship with each, relationships between family members, atmosphere at home.

-What kind of child were you?

-Favourite activities.

-What's your first memory?

-What's the happiest memory?

-What's the worst thing that happened?

Interpersonal relationships:

-Ask about friendships, sexual relationships, sexual orientation.

-Current relationships with partner, children, parents.

Dependency issues:

-Were you alone a lot?

-Who could you most depend on (child, teenager, adult)?

Separation and death:

-What frightens you most in your life?

-Have you ever seen anyone die?

-What's your first memory of death?

-Did you talk about it to anyone at the time, or since?

-Do you think about death? Are you afraid of death?

-Was there much separation or divorce in your family as a child?

-Have things ever seemed to be falling apart?

-Have you ever thought that you might be going mad?

-How do you cope when things go wrong?

Authority issues:

-What kind of people did you most respect when growing up?

-Were there people you found it difficult to deal with?

-Were you rebellious?

-Who is the person that has influenced you most in your life? How and why?

Ethical issues:

-Why is it so important to do this work? (Or, why are you no longer involved?)

-What do you get out of it?

-Do you feel personally responsible? For the problem; for the solution?

-Is there a conflict for you between personal and public responsibilities?

-You put a great deal of stress on (eg, democracy and human rights, peace] What do these terms mean for you?

-What makes "x" (use example of specific situation used by interviewee) right or wrong?

Ultimate concerns:

-Do you believe in any kind of God or Goddess?

-Is there any kind of life after death?

-What gives you a sense of vitality and authority?

-What do you feel connected to that is larger than yourself?

View of the future:

-What do you think is going to happen: to you? to the world?

-Can you see yourself in thirty years time?

-Do you think we are heading for some kind of disaster (economic catastrophe, nuclear or ecological)?

-Do you feel you can do any thing to prevent it?

Ask for dreams and fantasies pertinent to any of the above.

4.Structure and functioning of the group.

-Organisation of group, network, relationship to other groups.

-Leadership

-Decision making

-Degree of structure, presence of hierarchy

-Resources

-Dealing with conflict (interpersonal and intergroup)

-Do you perceive the group as a threat to anyone?

-How do you interpret this antagonism?

-Feelings about these aspects, role in creating them.

-Impact of this way of working on other aspects of life.

-Comparison with other ways of working?(eg, Solidarnosc, political parties, etc.) Is it more effective? enjoyable?

-Where does the group fit in the political scene? Is it a party in the making? Is it a single issue movement?

-Are political parties necessary?

-Do you vote/support a political party?

-Have your views on these issues changed during your involvement with group?

-Has your involvement changed the way you function politically?

5. Views on non-violence:

-Is it a tactic, or moral position?

-Ask for detailed examples of key events for that person: eg, conflict with police, soldiers, arrest, imprisonment.

-Can you relive feelings, thoughts, fears, hopes at the time.

Interview Protocol 2 (With Sample Questions)[1]

1. Non-violence:

-Do you define yourself as non-violent?

-What does that mean: is non-violence a political, a personal or a philosophical stance?

-Is there any situation in which you would use violence to achieve your goals? If so, explain.

-What justifies it?

-Describe the most important non-violent action. What was good/ bad about it? What did it achieve?

-Has the Gulf War changed your perspective?

---

[1] Many of the questions in this protocol are derived from the protocol used by Molly Andrews in "Lifetimes of Commitment: A Study of Socialist Activists" (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1989).

-How do you see change occuring?

-Terrorism, IRA, ANC: what is your view of this kind of action?

2. Politics:

-Are your actions political? What does that mean?

-Where do you see your group in political space?

-Was it or is it a threat to anyone, are you?

-Do you see personal life and political life as distinct spheres or intermingled?

3. Heart or Head:

-In your life are you generally guided by your heart or head, that is, by feelings or more detatched intellectual analysis?

-Do heart and mind pull in different directions? Can they be distinguished? Is one more prominent during action?

-Was there a situation where you did not agree intellectually with what the heart wanted to do? How was this resolved?

-When thinking through a problem and acting on it is it necessary to put feelings aside?

-What would you identify as the main emotion behind your need to act?

-And the main thoughts?

-What ideas/knowledge stimulate you to action: knowledge about injustice? pain? suffering? violence (to self or to others)?

-What feelings: anger? guilt? misery? fear?

4. Belief and action:

-Is there a gap between what you believe and what you do?

-How do you define commitment, to what or whom are you committed?

-To what or whom are you responsible?

-What do you mean by responsibility?

-Where does it come from?

5. Self:

-How do you describe yourself to yourself?

-How do you think others would describe you?

-Is the way you see yourself now different to how you saw self before?

-What has changed you?

-Does what you believe make up part of what you are? Even if these beliefs are not acted upon?

-How important is your activism to your concept of yourself?

-Is your membership of a class or ethnic group an important part of your identity?

-Did you have a sense of knowing who you were prior to engagement?

-Is being a woman/ man an important part of your identity?

-How has this changed?

-When most discouraged what has kept you going?

-What has most affirmed your values?

-What has shaken them?

-What is your main method of coping when things go wrong? Eg, running away, getting angry, seeking help.

-How important is interaction with others to your activism?

-Are friendships associated with political activities or separate?

-How important is success? Define it.

6. Moral Concerns:

-What makes a person moral?

-How do you define and distinguish right and wrong?

-Does morality change according to situation?

7. Moral dilemmas: real life (after Gilligan)[2]

-Have you ever experienced a situation where you had to choose between two or more courses of action and felt some conflict about which was the right course to take?

-What was the conflict?

-What did you decide to do?

-How did you decide what was right?

-What factors helped you decide?

-In retrospect was it the right decision? why?

---

[2] Based on questions devised by Gillligan, Lyons and co-workers to explore moral choices in real life. See, for example, Nona Plesner Lyons, "Two Perspectives On Self, Relationships, and Morality", *Harvard Educational Review* 53, 2 (1983), p. 143.

The Heinz Dilemma (after Kohlberg)[3]

In Europe, there is a woman who is near death from a rare disease. There is one drug which the doctor thinks might save her. It is a drug that a druggist in the town has recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, and the druggist is charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid #200 for the materials and is charging #2000. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together half of what he needed. So he told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper, or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered a drug and I'm entitled to make money for it."

-What do you see as the problem here?
-What should be done about it?
-Does Heinz have a duty to steal the drug? If so, why?
-If Heinz didn't love his wife anymore, should he still steal the drug for her? Why, or why not?
-Should he steal the drug for a stranger? Why, or why not?
-Imagine that he did steal the drug: he is caught and brought to trial, the jury finds him guilty, and the judge has to decide on a sentence. What should it be?
-Does the chemist have the right to charge what he likes for the medicine?

---

[3] Lawrence Kohlberg, "The Development of Modes Of Thinking and Choices in Years 10--16" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1958).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Conversation with Jacek Czaputowicz". *Solidarity Information Bulletin,* no. 117/119. Reprinted in *Uncensored Poland,* December 1985.

Adams, Rachel [Lynne Jones]. "Dialogue Across the Iron Curtain", *New Statesman,* 12 October 1984, pp. 21--22.

_____. "Take Not that Hypocritic Oath", *New Statesman,* 4 April 1986.

Adelson, Joseph, and O'Neil, Robert P. "Growth of Political Ideas in Adolescence: The Sense of Community", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 4 (1966), pp. 295--306.

Allen, Arthur. *Baltimore Sun,* 1 June 1982.

Allport, G. W. "The General and the Unique in Psychological Science". In *Human Inquiry: A Source Book of New Paradigm Research,* pp. 63--78. Edited by Peter Reason and John Rowan. Chichester: Wiley, 1981.

Americas Watch. *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities: CERJ* (New York: Americas Watch, 1989). Quoted in Lynne Jones, "Where Democracy is Fragile", *END Journal,* April-May 1986, pp. 14--15.

_____. *Messengers of Death: Human Rights in Guatemala, November 1988-February 1990.* New York: Americas Watch, 1990.

Americas Watch and Physicians for Human Rights. *Guatemala, Getting Away With Murder.* New York: Americas Watch, 1991.

Andrews, Molly, "Lifetimes of Commitment: A Study of Socialist Activists". Ph.D Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1989.

Andrews, Molly. *Lifetimes of Commitment: Aging, Politics, Psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Arendt, Hannah. *Crises of The Republic.* London, Harvest/HBJ, 1969.

Ascherson, Neal. *The Struggles for Poland.* New York: Random House, 1987.

Bardige, Betty "Things so Finely Human: Moral Sensibilities at Risk in Adolescence". In *Mapping the Moral Domain,* pp. 87--110. Edited by Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor. Cambridge: Harvard

University Press, 1988.

Barnett, Mark A. "Empathy and Related Responses in Children". In *Empathy and its Development*, pp. 149--153. Edited by Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Barnett, M. A., and McCoy, S. J. "The Relation of Distressful Childhood Experiences and Empathy in College Undergraduates, *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 150, 4 (1989), pp. 417--426.

Basch M. F. "Empathic Understanding: A Review of the Concept and Some Theoretical Considerations", *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 1 (1983), pp. 101--27.

Becker, Howard S.. "Whose Side Are We On?". In *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement With the Social World*, pp. 15--25. Edited by William J. Filstead. Chicago: Markham, 1971.

Becker, Howard S., and Blanche, Geer. "Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison". In *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement With the Social World*, pp. 132-152. Edited by William J. Filstead. Chicago: Markham, 1971.

Bertaux, Daniel. "From the Life History Approach to the Transformation Of Sociological Practice". In *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach In the Social Sciences*, pp. 29--46. Edited by Daniel Bertaux. London: Sage, 1981.

Bertaux, Daniel and Bertaux-Wiame, Isabelle. "Life Stories in the Baker's Trade". In *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach In the Social Sciences,* pp. 169 -189. Edited by Daniel Bertaux. London: Sage, 1981.

Billig, Michael. *Social Psychology and Intergroup Relations*. European Monographs in Social Psychology, no. 9. London: Academic Press in cooperation with the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology, 1976.

Blasi, Augusto. "Moral Identity: Its Role in Moral Functioning". In *Morality, Moral Behaviour and Moral Development,* pp. 128--139. Edited by W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gerwitz. New York: Wiley, 1984.

Boas, F. "Recent Anthropology", *Science* 98 (1943). Quoted in David G. Mandelbaum, "The Study of Life History". In *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*. Edited by Robert G. Burgess. London: Allen and Unwin, 1982.

Boehnke, Klaus; MacPherson, M.; Meador, M., and Petri, Horst. "How West German Adolescents Experience the Nuclear Threat, *Political Psychology* 10 (1989), pp. 419--443.

Bloom, Richard. "Provoking Peace in Poland", *END Journal,* Summer 1987, p. 5.

Braungart, Margaret M., and Braungart, Richard R. "The Life-Course Development of Left- and Right-Wing Youth Activist Leaders from the 1960s", *Political Psychology* 11 (1990), pp. 243--282.

British Medical Association, Board of Science and Education. *The Medical Effects of Nuclear War.* Chichester: Wiley on behalf of the British Medical Association, 1983.

Brown, Gill. *The Sunday Times*, 20 March 1983.

Brown, R., and Kulik, J. "Flashbulb Memories", *Cognition* 5 (1977), pp. 73--79., cited by Martin A. Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction,* pp. 62--63. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990.

Burgess, Robert G., ed. *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual.* London: Allen and Unwin, 1982.

Campbell, Beatrix. *The Iron Ladies: Why Do Women Vote Tory?* London: Virago, 1987.

_____. "Over the Greenham Fence and into the Poll Findings", *Guardian,* 21 January 1983.

_____. "Crisis at Greenham", *Sanity,* November 1987, pp. 19--21.

Caplan, Marlene Zelek, and Hay, Dale F. "Preschoolers' Responses to Peers' Distress and Beliefs About Bystander Intervention", *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 30 (1989), pp. 231--242.

Carmack, Robert. "The Story of Santa Cruz Quiche". In *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, pp. 47--55. Edited by Robert Carmack. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Carter, April. *Peace Movements.* London: Longman, 1992.

Central Office of Information. *Protect and Survive.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980.

Chapman, Michael; Zahn-Waxler, C.; Cooperman, G.; and Ianotti, R. "Empathy and Responsibility in the Motivation of Children's Helping", *Developmental Psychology* 23 (1987), pp. 140--145.

Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Church of England, Board of Social Responsibility. *The Church and the Bomb*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton/CIO Publishing, 1982).

Colby, Anne, and Damon, William. *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

Coles, Robert. *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear* London: Faber, 1964.

"Conferencia Por la Paz y los Derechos Humanos", Paid Advertisement, *El Grafico*, 2 February, 1992.

"Conversations in Poland", *END Journal*, March 1987, pp 6--8.

Conway, Martin A. *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990.

Cottle, Thomas J. "The Life Study: On Mutual Recognition and Subjective Inquiry". In *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, pp 123--128. Edited by Robert G. Burgess. London: Allen and Unwin, 1982.

Cowdry, R. William; Keniston, Kenneth; and Cabin, Seymour. "The War and Military Obligation: Private Attitudes and Public Actions", *Journal of Pesonality* 38 (December 1970), pp. 525-549.

"Cruise Missiles Locked inside Greenham Base", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 14 January 1984.

Cummings, E. Mark; Beck, B. H.; Iannotti, R.; Radke-Yarrow, M.; and Walker, Z.. "Early Organisation of Altruism and Aggression: Developmental Patterns and Individual Differences. In *Altruism and Aggression: Biological and Social Origins*, pp. 165--188. Edited by Carolyn Zahn Waxler, E. Mark Cummings, and Ronald Ianotti. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Czaputowicz, Jacek. "Why is the State Afraid?", *WiP Bulletin*, November 1986, trans. Franek Michalski. In *Across Frontiers*, Spring 1987, pp. 8--9.

Davies, Norman. *A Short History of Poland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Davis, Sheldon, and Hodson, Julie. *Witnesses to Political Violence in Central America*. Boston: Oxfam America, 1982.

Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj. Seattle and Berkeley: World Without War Council, 1989.

Dubiel, Jaroslaw. "The Spirit of Otto Schimek", *Voice of Solidarity,* April 1986.

Duncan, Martha. "Only the Marlboro Man: a Psychological Study of a Political Agitator", *Political Psychology,* 8, 2, pp. 165--190.

Duncan, Ronald. *The Writings of Gandhi.* London: Faber, 1951; Fontana, 1971.

"Economic Stabilization: An Illusion Shared by Few", *Central America Report* 18 (November 1991).

Eisenberg, Nancy, and Strayer, Janet, Eds. *Empathy and its Development.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Eisenberg, N., and Millar, P. "The Relations of Empathy to Prosocial and Related Behaviour", *Psychological Bulletin* 101 (1989), pp. 91--119.

Erikson, Erik *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History.* New York: Norton, 1958.

_____. *Identity, Youth and Crisis.* London: Faber, 1968.

_____. *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence.* New York: Norton, 1969.

_____. *Life History and the Historical Moment.* New York: Norton, 1975.

Fariss, Nancy M.. "Indians in Colonial Yucatan: Three Perspectives". In *Spaniards and Indians in Southeastern Mesoamerica: Essays on the History of Ethnic Relations,* pp. 1--39. Edited by Murdo J. Macleod and Robert Wasserstrom. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Feschbach, Norma Deitch. "Sex Differences in Empathy and Social Behaviour in Children". In *The Development of Prosocial Behaviour,* pp. 315--337. Edited by Nancy Eisenberg. New York: Academic Press, 1982.

_____. "Parental Empathy and Child Adjustment/Maladjustment". In *Empathy and its Development,* pp. 271--291. Edited by Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Feuer, Lewis. *The Conflict of Generations: the Character and Significance of Student Movements.* New York: Basic Books, 1969.

Filstead, William J., ed. *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand*

Involvement With the Social World. Chicago: Markham, 1971.

Fiske, Alan P. "The Cultural Relativity of Selfish Individualism: Anthropological Evidence that Humans are Inherently Sociable". In *Prosocial Behaviour: Review of Personality and Social Psychology 12*, pp. 176--214. Edited by M. S. Clark. London: Sage, 1991.

Fiske, Susan T. "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Pychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987), pp. 207--217.

Fiske, Susan T.; Pratto, R.; and Pavelchak, M. A. "Citizen's Images of Nuclear War: Contents and Consequences, *Journal of Social Issues* 39 (1983), pp. 41--66.

Flacks, Richard. "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest", *Journal of Social Issues* 23 (1967), pp. 52--75.

Fox, D. L., and Schofield, J. "Issue Salience, Perceived Efficacy and Perceived Risk: An Experimental Study of the Origins of Antinuclear War Activity", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 19 (1989), pp. 805--827.

Frank, Jerome D., and Nash, Earl H. "Commitment to Peace Work: A Preliminary Study of Determinants and Sustainers of Behaviour Change", *American Journal Of OrthoPsychiatry* 35 (1965) pp. 106--119.

Frank, Jerome D., and, Schonfield, Jacob D. "Commitment to Peace Work: II. A Closer Look at the Determinants", *American Journal Of OrthoPsychiatry* 37 (1967), pp. 112 -119.

Frank, Luisa, and Wheaton, Philip. *Indian Guatemala: The Path to Liberation*. Washington: EPICA Task Force, 1984.

Frankenberg, Ronald, "Participant Observers". In *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, pp. 50--52. Edited by Robert G. Burgess. London: Allen and Unwin, 1982.

Freedman, Laurence. "Thatcherism and Defence". In *The Thatcher Effect*, pp. 143--53. Edited by D. Kavanagh and A. Seldon. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989.

French P. L., and Hoorn, J. van. "Half a Nation Saw Nuclear War and Nobody Blinked? A Reassessment of the Impact of *The Day After* in Terms of a Theoretical Chain of Causality", *International Journal of Mental Health* 15 (1986), pp. 276--297.

Gamson, William. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1990.

Gans, Herbert J. "The Participant Observer as Human Being: Observations on The Personal Aspects of Fieldwork". In *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, pp. 53--61. Edited by Robert G. Burgess. London: Allen and Unwin, 1982.

Garton Ash, Timothy. *We The People: The Revolution of '89, Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin*. Cambridge: Granta in association with Penguin, 1990.

Gergen, Kenneth. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. Basic Books: New York, 1991.

Gergen, Kenneth J., and Ullman, Matthew. "Socialisation and the Characterological Basis of Political Activism". In *The Handbook of Political Socialization*, pp. 411--442. Edited by Stanley Allen Renshon. New York: Free Press, 1977.

Gilbert, G. N., and Mulkay, M. *Opening Pandora's Box: A Sociological Analysis of Scientists' Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

_____. "Remapping the Moral Domain". In *Mapping the Moral Domain*, pp. 3--19. Edited by Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Gilligan, Carol, and Wiggins, Grant. "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships". In *The Emergence of Morality in Early Childhood*, pp. 277--305. Edited by Jerome Kagan and Sharon Lamb. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Gilligan, Carol, and Attanucci, Jane. "Two Moral Orientations". In *Mapping the Moral Domain*, pp. 73--85. Edited by Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Gilligan, Carol; Ward, Janie Victoria; and Taylor, Jill Mclean, eds. *Mapping the Moral Domain*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Gilligan, Carol; Brown, L. M.; and Rogers, A. G. "Psyche Embedded: A Place For Body, Relationships, and Culture in Personality Theory". In *Studying Persons and Lives*, pp. 86--146. Edited by A. I. Rabin, Robert A. Zucker, Robert A. Emmons, and Susan Frank. New York: Springer, 1990.

Glaser, B. G., and Strauss, A. L. *The Discovery of Grounded*

Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. New York: Aldine, 1967.

Goldberg, Susan; LaCombe, S.; Levinson, D.; Parker, K.; Ross, C; Sommers, F. "Thinking About the Threat of Nuclear War: Relevance to Mental Health", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (October 1985), pp. 503--512.

Guatemalan Constitution. In Americas Watch, *The Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities: CERJ* (New York: Americas Watch, 1989), p. 2.

Gurr, Ted. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970.

Haan, Norma. "Hypothetical and Actual Moral Reasoning in a Situation of Civil Disobedience", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (1975), pp. 255--270.

Haan, Norma; Smith, M. Brewster; and Block, Jeanne H. "Moral Reasoning of Young Adults: Political-Social Behaviour, Family Backgrounds, and Personality Correlates", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 10 (1968), pp. 183--201.

Halliday, Fred. "The Sources of the New Cold War". In *Exterminism and Cold War*, pp. 289--328. Edited by *New Left Review*. London: Verso, 1982.

Hamilton, S.B.; Knox, T. A; and Keilin, W. G. "The Nuclear Family: Correspondence in Cognitive and Affective Reactions to the Threat of Nuclear War amongst Older Adolescents and their Parents", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 15 (1986), pp. 133--145.1986. Cited by Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Pychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987), pp. 207--217.

Hamilton, S. B.; Knox, T. A.; Keilin, W. G.; and Chavez, E.L. "In the Eye of the Beholder: Accounting for Variability in Cognitive/Affective Responses to the Threat of Nuclear War", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 17 (1987), pp. 927--952. Cited by Susan T. Fiske, "People's Reactions to Nuclear War: Implications for Pychologists", *American Psychologist* 42 (March 1987), pp. 207--217.

Handy, Jim. *Gift of the Devil: A History of Guatemala*. Boston: South End Press, 1984.

Harding, Sandra. *Feminism and Methodology*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987.

Harford, Barbara, and Hopkins, Sarah, *Greenham Common: Women*

at the Wire. London: The Women's Press, 1983.

Haste, Helen. "Everybody's Scared - But Life Goes On: Coping, Defense and Action in the Face of Nuclear Threat", *Journal of Adolescence* 12 (1989).

Haste, Helen, and Baddeley, Jane. "Moral Theory and Culture: The Case of Gender". In *The Handbook of Moral Development*, pp. 223--250. Edited by W. M. Kurtines and J. L. Gerwitz. Erlbaum, 1991.

Helsinki Watch. *Violations of the Helsinki Accords: Poland. December 1988: A Supplement*. New York: Helsinki Watch Committee, 1988.

Henwood, Karen, and Pidgeon, Nick. "Seeing Through Women's Eyes: Qualitative Methods and Feminist Research". June 1992. (Mimeographed.)

_____. "Qualitative Research and Psychological Theorising", *British Journal of Psychology* 83 (1992), pp. 97--111.

Hibbs, D. *Mass Political Violence*. New York: John Wiley, 1973. Cited by J. Craig Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements". In *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, pp. 81--153. Edited by Samuel L. Long. New York and London: Plenum, 1981.

Hinton, James. *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in Twentieth Century Britain*. London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989.

Hipperson, Sarah. "Are We Making the Best of Cruise?" *Women For Life on Earth,* Autumn 1984.

Hoffman, Martin. "The Contribution of Empathy to Justice and Moral Judgement". In *Empathy and its Development*, pp. 47--81. Edited by Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

_____. "Personality and Social Development", *Annual Review of Psychology* 28 (1977), pp. 295--321.

"Interview with Jacek Czaputowicz". *War Resister's International Bulletin,* May/June1985.

James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. New York, Longmans, 1916.

Jenkins, J. Craig. "Sociopolitical Movements". In *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol.4, pp. 81--153. Edited by Samuel L. Long. New York and London: Plenum, 1981.

Johnston, K. "Two Moral Orientations, Two Problem Solving

Strategies: Adolescents' Solutions to Dilemmas in Fables". Ed. D. Dissertation, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1985. Cited by Carol Gilligan and Grant Wiggins, "The origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships". In *The Emergence of Morality in Early Childhood*, pp. 277-305 . Edited by Jerome Kagan and Sharon Lamb (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Jonas, Susanne, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads and U.S. Power* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1991).

Jones, Lynne. *Keeping The Peace*. London: Women's Press, 1983.

_____. "Shut up and Listen", *New Statesman,* 2 March 1984.

_____. "Where Democracy is Fragile", *END Journal,* April-May 1986, pp. 14--15.

_____. *States of Change: A Central European Diary.* London: Merlin, 1990.

_____. "Murder in Guatemala", *New Left Review* 182 (July/August 1990), pp. 53--61.

Kaldor, Mary. "After the Cold War". In *Europe from Below: An East-West Dialogue*. Edited by Mary Kaldor. London: Verso, 1990.

Keniston, Kenneth. *Youth and Dissent: The Rise of a New Opposition*. New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1971.

King, Martin Luther. "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence". In *The Pacifist Conscience*, pp. 402--408. Edited by Peter Mayer. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1966.

King, Ynestra. "All is Connectedness: Scenes From the Women's Pentagon Action USA". In *Keeping The Peace*, pp. 40--64. Edited by Lynne Jones. London: Women's Press, 1983.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. "The Development of Modes Of Thinking and Choices in Years 10--16". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1958.

Kohlberg, L., and Kramer, R. "Continuities and Discontinuities in Childhood and Adult Moral Development", *Human Development* 12 (1969), pp. 93--120.

Kohlberg, Lawrence, and Candee, Daniel. "The Relationship of Moral Judgement to Moral Action". In *Morality, Moral Behaviour and Moral Development,* pp. 498--581. Edited by W. M. Kurtines, and J. L. Gerwitz. New York, Wiley,

1984.

Kornhauser, W. *The Politics of Mass Society*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.

Kossakowski, Marek. "Leave the Bunkers to the Bats!", in *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj*, pp. 63--66. Seattle and Berkeley: World Without War Council, 1989.

Kubler Ross, Elizabeth. *On Death and Dying*. London: Tavistock, 1970.

Kuron, Jacek. "Open Letter to All People in the World Who Care About Peace". *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (Warsaw), 7 June 1984.

Kurtines, W. M., and Gerwitz, J. L., eds. *Morality, Moral Behaviour and Moral Development*. New York: Wiley, 1984.

Lasswell, Harold. *The Political Writings of Harold D. Lasswell*. Illinois: The Free Press, 1951.

Lasswell, Harold. *Psychopathology and Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Lazarski, Christopher "The Polish Independent Peace Movement". In *In Search of Civil Society: Independent Peace Movements In the Soviet Bloc*, pp. 118--135. Edited by Vladimir Tismaneanu. London: Routledge, 1990.

Lewin, Kurt. *Field Theory in Social Science*. New York: Harper, 1951.

Liddington, Jill. *The Long Road to Greenham: Feminism and Antimilitarism in Britain Since 1820*. Virago: London, 1989.

Lifton, Robert Jay. *History and Human Survival*. New York: Random House, 1971.

_____. *The Broken Connection*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

_____. *The Nazi Doctors: A Study of the Psychology of Evil*. London: Macmillan, 1986.

_____. *The Future of Immortality and Other Essays for a Nuclear Age*. New York: Basic Books, 1987.

_____. *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Lovell, George. "Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala in Historical Perspective", *Latin American Research*

Review, no.2 (1988), pp. 25--57.

Lovelock, J. E. *The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine.* London: Gaia Books, 1991.

Lykes, M. Brinton. "Gender and Individualistic vs Collectivist Bases for Notions About the Self", *Journal of Personality* 53 (1985), pp. 356--382.

_____."The Caring Self: Social Experiences of Power and Powerlessness". In *Who Cares? Theory Research and Educational Implications of the Ethic of Love*, pp. 164 -179. Edited by M. Brabek. New York: Prager, 1989.

Lyons, Nona Plesner. "Two Perspectives on Self, Relationships, and Morality", *Harvard Educational Review* 53 (1983), pp. 125--146.

McCarthy, John D., and Zald, Mayer N. "Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (May 1977), pp. 1212--1241.

Mclintock, Michael. *The American Connection, Vol.II: State Terror and Popular Resistance in Guatemala.* London: Zed Books, 1985.

Mankoff, Milton, and Flacks, Richard. "The Changing Basis of The American Student Movement", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 395 (May 1971), pp. 54--67.

Marsh, Alan. *Protest and Political Conciousness.* Sage Library of Social Research 49. London: Sage Publications, 1977.

Marshall, Catherine, and Rossmann, Gretchen. *Designing Qualitative Research.* London: Sage, 1989.

Mastnak, Tomaz. "Civil Society in War", Ljubljana, 1992. (Mimeographed.)

Matson, Floyd W. *The Broken Image.* Garden City N. Y., Anchor, 1966. Cited in William J. Filstead, *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement With the Social World.* Chicago: Markham, 1971.

Melucci, Alberto. *Nomads of the Present.* London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989.

Michalski, Franek. "Anarchism and Youth Culture in Poland", *Across Frontiers,* Winter 1988.

Michnik, Adam, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays.* Translated by Maya Latynski. Berkeley, University of

Midgeley, Mary. *Heart and Mind, The Varieties of Moral*

Experience. New York: St Martin's Press, 1991.

Milbrath, Lester W. "Political Participation". In *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, pp. 197--240. Edited by Samuel L. Long. New York and London: Plenum, 1981.

Milburn, Michael A., and Watanabe, Paul Y.. "Activism against Armageddon: Some Predictors of Nuclear Related Behaviour", *Political Psychology* 9 (1988), pp. 459--470.

Millar, P., and Eisenberg, N. "The Relation of Empathy to Aggressive and Externalising/ Antisocial Behaviour", *Psychological Bulletin* 103 (1988), pp. 324--344.

Miller, Alice. *For Your Own Good: The Roots of Violence in Child-Rearing*. London: Virago, 1987.

_____. *The Untouched Key: Tracing Childhood Trauma in Creativity and Destructiveness*. London: Virago, 1990.

Mischel, Walter. *Personality and Assessment* (New York: Wiley, 1968). Quoted in Gergen, Kenneth J., and Ullman, Matthew. "Socialisation and the Characterological Basis of Political Activism". In *The Handbook of Political Socialization*, pp. 411-442. Edited by Stanley Allen Renshon. New York: Free Press, 1977.

Nairn, Allan, and Simon, Jean-Marie Simon, "The Bureaucracy of Death", *The New Republic*, 30 June 1986.

Neisser, U. "John Dean's Memory: A Case Study", *Cognition* 9 (1981), pp. 1-22. Cited by Martin A.Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction*, pp. 96-98. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990.

Newcomb, M. D. "Nuclear Attitudes and Reactions: Associations with Depression, Drug Use and Quality of Life', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986), pp. 906--920. Quoted in Robert T. Schatz and Susan T. Fiske, "International Reactions to the Threat of Nuclear War: The Rise and Fall of Concern in the Eighties", *Political Psychology* 13 (1992), p. 10.

Niemczyk, Piotr. Interview, *Poglad*, 16 February 1986.

Nottingham WONT. "Working as a Group: Nottingham Women Oppose the Nuclear Threat". In *Keeping The Peace*. Edited by Lynne Jones. London: Women's Press, 1983.

Oakley, Anne. "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms". In *Doing Feminist Research*, pp. 30--61. Edited by Helen Roberts. London: Routledge, 1981.

Oliner, Samuel P., and Oliner, Pearl M. *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. New York: Free Press, 1988.

Ost, David, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Pland since 1968*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

"Peace movement on trial", *Uncensored Poland*, January 1986.

"Peace Women Lecture Row Rocks School", *Newbury Weekly News*, 24 November 1983.

Polish Helsinki Committee. *Human Rights in Poland Since December 1981: A Report by the Polish Helsinki Committee to the Human Rights Experts' Meeting in Ottawa, May 1985*. Translated by Bogdan and Elizabeth Wasiutynski. New York: Helsinki Watch Committee, 1985.

Polish Helsinki Watch Committee. *Poland under Martial Law: A Report on Human Rights*. New York: U.S. Helsinki Watch Committee, 1983.

The Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Qiche Maya. English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley, from the translation of Adrian Recinos. (Norman and London: Oklahoma Press, 1950).

Radcliffe Richards, Janet, "Why Should Women Have the Monopoly of Virtue?", *Guardian*, 10 May 1983.

Radziwill, Konstanty. Speech to END Convention, Coventry, July 1987. (Mimeographed.)

Rawls, John, "The Justification of Civil Disobedience". *In Civil Disobedience: Theory and Practise*, pp. 240--255. Edited by Hugo Adam Bedau. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1969.

Reason, Peter, and Rowan, John. *Human Inquiry: A Source Book of New Paradigm Research*. Chichester: Wiley, 1981.

Rochon, Thomas R. *Mobilizing for Peace: The Antinuclear Movements in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Romaszewski, Zbigniew, "Solidarity at the Crossroads", *Kultura* 1-2 (1987).

Ruddick, Sarah. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London, The Women's Press, 1989.

Runyan, William McKinley. *Life Histories and Psychobiography: Explorations in Theory and Method*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Schatz, Robert T., and Fiske, Susan T. "International Reactions to the Threat of Nuclear War: the Rise and Fall of Concern in the Eighties", *Political Psychology* 13 (1992), pp. 1-29.

Sharp, Gene. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Extending Horizon Books, 1973.

Sherif, Carolyn Wood. "Bias in Psychology". In *Feminism and Methodology*. Edited by Sandra Harding. Milton Keynes: Open University Press 1987.

Simon, Jean-Marie. *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny*. New York: Norton, 1987.

Smith, Joan, "Officialdom Grinds the Peace Camps", *New Statesman,* 14 February 1986.

Solomon, Frederic, and Fishman, Jacob R. "The Psychosocial Meaning of Nonviolence in Student Civil Rights Activities", *Psychiatry* 25 (1964), pp. 227--236.

"Special Report, Guatemala 1986-90: Rocky Transition to Democracy", *Central America Report* 18 (May 1991).

Spilerman, Seymour. *The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1969. Cited by J. Craig Jenkins, "Sociopolitical Movements". In *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 4, edited by Samuel L. Long, pp. 81--153. New York and London: Plenum, 1981.

Squires, M. F. "Empathic, Nurturant and Abusive Behaviour of Normally and Abnormally Reared Girls", *Dissertation Abstracts International* 40. Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1979.

Staub, Ervin. "Commentary on Part 1". In *Empathy and its Development*, pp. 103--118. Edited by Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Suddick, Anne. "Making the Links: Women Against Pit Closures". In *A Nuclear Future?* Edited by Raphael Samuel and Hilary Wainwright. London: The Socialist Society, 1986.

Swade, Tamara. "Babies Against The Bomb". In *Keeping the Peace*. Edited by Lynne Jones. London: The Women's Press, 1983.

Tajfel, Henri. "Interindividual Behaviour and Intergroup Behaviour". In *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Edited by H. Tajfel. London: Academic Press, 1978. Cited by Molly Andrews, *Lifetimes of*

Commitment: Aging, Politics, Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

"The Physical Security of Military Installations in the United Kingdom", vol. I. *Second Report from the House of Commons Defence Committee, Session 1983-84*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984,

Thompson, E. P. *Protest and Survive*. Spokesman Pamphlet 71, 2nd ed. London: Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1980.

Thompson, Ross A. "Empathy and Emotional Understanding: The Early Development of Empathy in Eisenberg and Strayer". In *Empathy and its Development*, pp. 119--146. Edited by Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilisation to Revolution*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1978.

Tronto, Joan C. "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12 (1987), pp. 644--663.

Tyler, Tom R., and Mcgraw, Kathleen M. "The Threat of Nuclear War: Risk Interpretation and Behavioural Response", *Journal of Social Issues* 39 (1983), pp. 25-40.

Ward, Janie Victoria. "Urban Adolescents' Conceptions of Violence". In *Mapping the Moral Domain*, pp. 175-200. Edited by Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill Mclean Taylor. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Warszawski, David. "Set an Example . . .", in *Documents of Wolnosc i Pokoj*, pp. 32--35. Seattle and Berkeley: World Without War Council, 1989.

Watson, James D. *The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Structure of DNA*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson,1981.

Weinreich-Haste, Helen. "Kohlberg's Contribution to Political Psychology: A Positive View". In *Lawrence Kohlberg: Consensus and Controversy*, pp. 337--390. Edited by S. Mogdil and C. Mogdil. Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1986.

Weinreich-Haste, Helen. "Moral Responsibility and Moral Commitment: The Integration of Affect and Commitment". In *The Moral Domain*, pp. 315--359. Edited by T. E. Wren. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990.

Westkott, M. "Feminist Criticism of the Social Sciences",

Harvard Educational Review 49, 4 (1979), pp. 422--430.

White, Brian. *Britain, Detente and Changing East-West Relations.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Wingfield, Lindy, and Haste, Helen. "Connectedness and Separateness: Cognitive Style or Moral Orientation?", *Journal of Moral Education* 16 (1987), pp. 214--225.

Women's Peace Alliance Newsletter, 27 March 1987.

Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas.* London, Penguin, 1977.

Zur, J. *Violent Memories: Quiche War Widows in Northwest Highland Guatemala.* PhD dissertation, University of London, 1983.